Chief Architect X17

Professional 3D Home Design Software

Migration Guide

Steps and considerations for migrating to the new program version.

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What's New in Chief Architect X17

Chapter 1

Welcome to Chief Architect X17. This topic has been written to help our upgrading customers make a smooth transition from earlier versions of Chief Architect to Chief Architect X17.

Getting Started Checklist

There are many new features in Chief Architect X17, and many existing features have changed. The following list suggests steps you should take before migrating your files to Chief Architect X17. More information about each of these steps can be found after the list.

☐ 1. **Review the List of New and Improved Features by Chapter**

There are a number of important reasons why you should familiarize yourself with the new and improved features in Chief Architect X17:

- New and improved features allow you to produce drawings more efficiently, so it is to your advantage to use them.
- Some changes to existing functionality may affect your accustomed drawing style and thus your productivity if you are not aware of them.
- New features may affect your choice of settings in your template files, as well as your preferred Preferences settings.

See *New and Improved Features by Chapter on page 13*.

☐ 2. **Review Migrating Legacy Content**

Legacy users of Chief Architect often have library catalogs and other custom content that they want to continue using. See *Migrating Legacy Content on page 3*.

☐ 3. **Review Migrating Legacy Settings**

Before migrating Preferences, Toolbars, or Hotkeys, bear in mind that legacy settings may not be best suited for using the new program version. See *Migrating Legacy Settings on page 4*.

☐ 4. **Review Migrating Legacy Templates**

Before migrating Templates, bear in mind that they may not be set up to take advantage of new tools in the new program version. See *Migrating Legacy Templates on page 4*.

☐ 5. **Review the Considerations for Legacy Files**

Before opening a plan or layout file created in a previous version of Chief Architect, be aware of potential changes to the file that could occur in the new program version. See *Considerations for Legacy Files on page 5*.

☐ 6. **Launch Chief Architect X17**

Once you have learned about the new features in Version X17 and decided whether to migrate any custom settings from a legacy program version, launch Chief Architect X17. The first time you launch, the Migrate Settings dialog will give you the opportunity to bring legacy settings and content forward into Version X17.

Migrating Legacy Content

Legacy users of Chief Architect Premier often have a wealth of library catalogs and other custom content that they have built over time and want to continue using.

Legacy Library Content

There are several ways that legacy library catalogs can be brought into Chief Architect X17.

If you have Chief Architect version X5 through X16 installed on your computer, the Migrate Settings dialog will display after you activate the license, allowing you to migrate library content as well as a selection of other settings for use in Chief Architect X17. If multiple legacy versions are present on the system, only the data associated with the most recent will be migrated.

You can import library files from Versions X1 through X5 at any time by selecting **Library> Import Library (.calib, .calibz)** from the program menu.

Custom Graphics Files

Chief Architect can use graphics files regardless of where they are stored on your system; however, it is a good idea to keep your data organized in one location. If you have custom graphics files, including textures, images or backdrops that you used in a previous program version, you can copy them manually using your operating system for use in Chief Architect X17.

- Copy custom texture files to the Chief Architect X17 Textures folder located in the Chief Architect X17 Data folder.
- Copy custom image files to your Chief Architect X17 Images folder located in the Chief Architect X17 Data folder.
- Copy custom backdrop files to your Chief Architect X17 Backdrops folder located in the Chief Architect X17 Data folder.

In Chief Architect X1 through X16, custom graphics were saved in the Chief Architect Data folder, as they are in version X17. In version 10, they were located in the program's installation directory, in folders that began with "My". Custom backdrops, for example, were saved in "My Backdrops".

Texture and image files are not listed in the Library Browser. These files can be assigned to material and image objects, however, which are stored in the library so it is important to retain them. There are several tools available for adding materials and images to the library.

Migrating Legacy Settings

The Migrate Settings dialog lets you migrate settings from the most recent legacy installation of your Chief Architect title into Version X17. If you have extensively customized your Preferences, Toolbars, or Hotkeys, you may want to continue using those settings. Before doing so, though, it is important to consider that you may make it harder to take advantage of new tools and functionality in Version X17.

Preferences Settings

Although you can migrate your Preferences settings from Versions X5 through X16 into Version X17, the settings that are available in Version X17 may differ from previous program versions. You should review all the settings in the Preferences dialog to make sure that they are set to suit your drawing needs.

Custom Toolbar Configurations

It is possible to migrate toolbar configuration files from previous program versions into Version X17; however, it is also possible that your migrated toolbars will be missing new tools available in Version X17.

Additionally, obsolete toolbar buttons are occasionally removed from the program and will also be removed from migrated legacy toolbars. See *New and Improved Features by Chapter on page 13* for information about new features as well as removed or deprecated tools.

Custom Hotkeys

Like toolbar configurations, legacy hotkeys can be migrated into Chief Architect Premier X17. Bear in mind, though, that occasionally the default hotkeys are modified to accommodate new features or changes in default system hotkeys.

Migrating Legacy Templates

Chief Architect X17 installs a selection of template plan and layout files that have been set up to take advantage of the program's updated tools and features. Although you can migrate your template files for use in Version X17, for best results it is recommended that you either:

- Use the installed templates when creating new plans and layout files in Chief Architect X17
- Use the installed templates as the basis for creating new custom templates.

If you choose to continue using template files that you used in a previous program version, it is very important that you take the time to review all the default settings in the file, making sure that they will continue to suit your needs in Version X17. See *New and Improved Features by Chapter on page 13*.

Next, make sure that you are aware of changes in Version X17 that may affect legacy files: including templates. See *Considerations for Legacy Files on page 5*.

When you are ready to proceed, make copies of your custom templates in the Chief Architect X17 Templates directory. The Templates directory is located in the Chief Architect X17 Data folder. Next, open each template as you would a regular plan or layout file, by selecting **File> Open**, and then save any changes you make by selecting **File> Save**.

If you do choose to continue using a legacy template plan, it is best to also use a legacy layout template from the same program version, as well. As with a template plan, take the time to go through the layout template's defaults and make sure they are suited for use in Version X17 and that their line weight scales do not conflict with those in your template plans.

Considerations for Legacy Files

As in all software, every new program version introduces changes to its functionality as well as to the user interface. If you choose to bring a project forward, be sure to take a few moments to look it over in the new version and confirm that the new functionality does not require you to make any modifications. Particularly if you have an approaching deadline, you may find it best to finish the current project in the version of the software in which you began it.

Be sure to read this section before opening any plans created in earlier versions of Chief Architect.

Chief Architect X17 can open the **.plan** and **.layout** files from prior versions. Files with the older .pl and .la file extensions are no longer supported, however, and cannot be opened by Chief Architect X17. Before opening any files created in earlier versions of Chief Architect, it is important to be aware of changes made in the newest version and the effect they may have on your legacy plan and layout files.

Please note that files saved in the latest program version cannot be read by older versions of the software. When a legacy file is saved in the version X17, an unaltered copy of the original file is created in the Chief Architect X17 Data folder, under Archives, which can still be opened in the original version.

For Files Created in Version X16 and Prior

In addition to the above recommendations, if you wish to open files created in Chief Architect Version X16 or prior, bear in mind the following:

1. Sun Angle Location and Time Zone

   In Chief Architect X16 and prior, the default Latitude, Longitude, and Time Zone used by Sun Angles were set globally in the Preferences dialog and individual Sun Angles could be customized. In Version X17, these defaults are file-specific, set in the General Plan Defaults dialog, and cannot be modified for individual Sun Angles. When a legacy file with a Sun Angle present is opened in Version X17, its Location and Time Zone are set as the defaults. If multiple Sun Angles with different Location or Time Zone data are present, some of them may be altered.

2. Automatic Terrain Height

   In Version X17, the Automatic terrain height functionality was updated for use with the Terrain Elevation Reference Point feature. When a legacy file is opened in Version X17, Automatic will be unchecked in the Terrain Specification dialog to prevent the terrain from moving relative to the structure.

3. Automatic Fillers for Soffits, Shelves, and Partitions

   In Chief Architect X16 and prior, Soffits, Shelves, and Partitions received automatic fillers if they were spaced within 3" (75 mm) of one another. In Version X17, these objects do not receive auto fillers. When a legacy file is opened in Version X17, it is possible that some Soffits, Shelves, and/or Partitions positioned close to one another without touching may have small gaps between them.

For Files Created in Version X15 and Prior

In addition to the above recommendations, if you wish to open files created in Chief Architect Version X15 or prior, bear in mind the following:

1. GPU Ray Trace Samples

   In Chief Architect X16, GPU ray tracing is performed using path tracing, which requires more samples than in previous versions but produces more accurate lighting effects more efficiently. When a legacy file from Version X15 is opened in Version X17, the Maximum Samples value is multiplied by 10. When a legacy file from Version X14 or prior is opened in Version X17, Maximum Samples is set at 2000.

2. Dimension Label Positioning

3. In Version X16, improvements were made to the method that determines dimension label positioning. When a legacy file is opened in Version X17, it is possible that some dimension labels may be in a slightly different position than in the original version.

4. Door Thickness

   In Chief Architect X15 and prior, the Thickness value set in the Door Specification dialog affected parametric door panels in 3D views but not door symbols. In Version X16, this setting affects both types of door panel in 3D. When a legacy file is opened in Version X17, any symbol door panels will have the depth specified in the Door Specification dialog when viewed in a camera view rather than the depth of the symbol object.

5. PDF Rotation in Mac Version

6. In Chief ArchitectX15 and prior, rotation of imported PDF files was not read in the Mac version of the software, while in Version X16, it is. When a legacy file is opened in Version X17, imported PDFs may not be oriented at the same angle as in prior versions.

7. Material Emissivity

   In Chief Architect X15 and prior, the Emissive property for materials could be set using decimal values. In Version X16, this setting supports whole numbers only. When a legacy file is opened in Version X17, any decimal Emissive values will be rounded to the nearest whole number. If this setting is rounded to zero, the change may be noticeable in Standard, Duotone, and Watercolor renderings.

For Files Created in Version X14 and Prior

In addition to the above recommendations, if you wish to open files created in Chief Architect Version X14 or prior, bear in mind the following:

1. Window Casing Reveal

   In Chief Architect X14 and prior, window casing had an Overlap Frame setting that controlled where casing was placed relative to the window frame, and windows with different frame Width values for their top, bottom, and sides would also have different reveals. In Version X15, this setting was replaced with a Reveal setting. When a legacy file is opened in Version X17, any windows with different Width values will no longer have different reveals.

2. Text Indent and Margins

   In Chief Architect X14 and prior, the indent and margins of text could vary depending on the font used. In Version X15, indent and margins are not affected by settings in the font. When a legacy file is opened in Version X17, text with varying indent and/or margins may be affected.

For Files Created in Version X13 and Prior

In addition to the above recommendations, if you wish to open files created in Chief Architect Version X13 or prior, bear in mind the following:

1. Stair Walklines

   In Chief Architect X13 and prior, Walklines were drawn on the "Dimensions" layer. In Version X14, they are drawn on the same layer as the staircase. When a legacy file is opened in Version X17, any Walklines displaying in the file may have different line color, weight, and style attributes.

2. Door Rough Openings

   In Chief Architect X13 and prior, if a door's Floor to Bottom height was not sufficient to accommodate its Bottom Rough Opening, the door's Top Rough Opening space would be increased in the model but not in the Door Specification dialog. In Version X14, this no longer occurs: if the Floor to Bottom height is less than the Bottom Rough Opening, the full Bottom Rough Opening is simply not modeled when framing is generated. When a legacy file is opened in Version X17, its rough opening is modeled exactly as it was in the previous program version but its Top and Bottom Rough Opening values now reflect how the rough opening is modeled.

3. NKBA Auto Dimensions

   In Chief Architect X13 and prior, the NKBA Auto Dimension and NKBA Auto Elevation Dimension tools had restricted default settings that met drawing standards set by the National Kitchen and Bath Association. In order to allow greater flexibility in Version X17, these tools have been merged into the other Auto Dimension tools. In plan files created using a template installed with Version X17, NKBA compliant dimensions can be created using the "Kitchen and Bath Dimension Defaults". In legacy plans opened in Version X17, use the "Legacy NKBA Dimension Defaults".

For Files Created in Version X12 and Prior

In addition to the above recommendations, if you wish to open files created in Chief Architect Version X12 or prior, bear in mind the following:

1. Default 110V Ceiling Outlet

   In Chief Architect X12 and prior, the 110V Outlet tool did not have the ability to place outlets in ceilings. In Version X13, this ability was added, as was the new GFCI Outlet tool. When a legacy file is opened in Version X17, the new Electrical Defaults settings for these items will automatically refer to objects in the Version X17 Core Catalogs. You should confirm that these defaults meet your needs. If these default objects are not present in your library, a warning message will inform you of the issue.

2. Sliding Door Hinge Side

   In Chief Architect X12 and prior, the fixed or 'hinge' side of sliding doors was described as viewed from the exterior side of the door. In Version X13, the hinge side is described using the more common method: as viewed from the interior side. When a legacy file is opened in Version X17, all instances of the %hinge_side% Name-Value Pair in labels, schedules, and the Materials List will use the new method. You should confirm that the Hinge Side information in labels, schedules, and Materials Lists meets your needs.

3. Automatic and Manual Dimension Layers

   In Chief Architect X12 and prior, the system default layer for automatically generated dimension lines was "Dimensions, Automatic", and the system default for manually drawn dimensions was "Dimensions, Manual". In Version X17, the system default layer for all dimensions is simply "Dimensions". When a legacy file is opened in Version X17, automatic dimensions that were on the "Dimensions, Automatic" layer in the earlier version will be placed on the "Dimensions, Legacy" layer while any dimensions that were on the "Dimensions, Manual" layer in the previous version will be placed on the "Dimensions" layer.

4. Gable Lines

   In Chief Architect X12 and prior, Gable Lines with a Pitch value of 90° were allowed but did not affect automatic roof generation. In Version X17, they are not supported. When a legacy file is opened in Version X17, any Gable Lines with a Pitch of 90° will be removed automatically. This will not affect the current roof or automatic roof generation.

For Files Created in Version X11 and Prior

In addition to the above recommendations, if you wish to open files created in Chief Architect Version X11 or prior, bear in mind the following:

1. Perspective Crop Mode

   In Chief Architect X8 through X11, Perspective Crop Mode allowed older functionality governing zooming in cameras from Version X7 and prior to be preserved in saved cameras in legacy plans migrated forward. This deprecated tool has been removed from the program's menu and toolbars in Version X12, although it can be migrated with legacy toolbars and hotkeys. Saved cameras in legacy plans with this behavior enabled may become distorted if you pan or zoom in the view. To permanently disable this behavior in a camera view and resolve the resulting distortion, select **Window> Fill Window** or press the ***F6*** key.

2. Layout Layer Sets

   In Chief Architect X11 and prior, the Send to Layout dialog had a sticky Make Copy of Active Layer Set option that created a new layer set for the layout view to help preserve layer settings in that view. This option was removed in Version X12 to encourage use of the multiple saved plan views. Saved plan views did not exist in Version X9 and prior, however, so if you open a plan originally created in Version X9 or prior, extra care must be taken to make sure layout views do not use the same layer set.

3. Materials List Formulas and Ruby Macros

   Name-Value Pairs returned length, area, and volume measurements as Floats. In Version X12, these values are reported using the Measurement class that includes both a numeric value and a unit. Older Ruby code may change behavior when migrated into Version X12. When a legacy Ruby macro or materials list formula is evaluated, the program will automatically check its version and prompt you to migrate it to the newest version.

4. Units of Measurement

   In Chief Architect X11 and prior, units of measurement used by the program, including user-defined units, were stored in a file called Units.dat located in the Chief Architect Data folder. Beginning in version X12, this information is saved with other Preferences settings.

For Files Created in Version X10 and Prior

In addition to the above recommendations, if you wish to open files created in Chief Architect Version X10 or prior, bear in mind the following:

1. Marker and Elevation Point Heights

   In Chief Architect X10 and prior, the # sign could be added to the label of a Marker or Elevation Point and the label would report the height of the Marker or the Elevation Point's elevation. In Version X17, text macros are used to report this information instead. In legacy plans, any # signs in Marker or Elevation Point labels will be replaced by the %heightf% or %elevationf% macro.

2. Glass Shower Walls

   In Chief Architect X10 and prior, the "Glass Shower" Wall Type was included in installed template files and like other Wall Types, built to the structural layer of floors and ceilings and to the Main Layer of adjacent walls. In Version X17, this Wall Type has the new Partition Wall attribute and instead builds to floor, ceiling, and wall surfaces. When a legacy file is opened in Version X17, this Wall Type will be modified to have Partition Wall checked automatically and existing walls will be affected by this change.

3. Fixture Schedules

In Chief Architect X10 and prior, 3D Elevations and Perspectives in Fixture Schedules showed cabinet fixtures inserted into a cabinet. In Version X17, fixtures are shown on their own, even when they are inserted into an object in the plan. When a legacy file is opened in Version X17, any fixture schedules showing 3D views of objects may be affected by this change.

For Files Created in Version X9 and Prior

In addition to the above recommendations, if you wish to open files created in Chief Architect Version X9 or prior, bear in mind the following:

1. Parallel Lights

   In Chief Architect X9 and prior, Parallel Light sources could be specified for electrical light fixtures and Added Lights. In Version X17, Parallel Lights are no longer supported. In legacy plans opened in Version X17, any Parallel Light sources will be converted to Spot Lights.

2. Brick Ledges

   In Chief Architect X9 and prior, brick ledges were not represented in plan view. In Version X17, brick ledges are drawn in plan view on the “Slabs” layer in stem wall and grade beam foundations, and on the “Walls, Foundation” layer in monolithic slab foundations. When a legacy file is opened in Version X17, brick ledges, if present, will be drawn.

3. Window Types

   In Chief Architect X9 and prior, the %type% text macro for windows reported some Window Types using abbreviations. In Version X17, the abbreviations were replaced with full words. When a legacy file is opened in Version X17, the width of Window Schedules may be affected, as may the width of columns in saved Materials Lists.

4. Joist Direction Lines

   In Chief Architect X9 and prior, Joist Direction Lines described all platform framing as “joists” and used nominal lumber sizes in whole inches in US Unit plans. In Version X17, the platform’s framing Structure Type is reported and in US Unit plans, the size is described in fractional inches. When a legacy file is opened in Version X17, Joist Direction Lines will use the new, more accurate labeling.

5. Custom Schedule Columns

   In Chief Architect X9 and prior, custom schedule columns could be created by adding a Sub Category to a type of object on the Categories panel of the Preferences dialog. In Version X17, Sub Categories can no longer be created in this manner. When a legacy file is opened in Version X17, any Sub Categories shown as custom schedule columns will be converted to Custom Fields.

6. Registered User Text Macros

   In Chief Architect X9 and prior, a selection of Registered User Text Macros could be inserted into Texts, Callouts, and Markers. These macros no longer displayed any data and in Version X17, they are no longer recognized. When a legacy file is opened in Version X17, any Registered User macros inserted into text objects are treated as regular text.

For Files Created in Version X8 and Prior

In addition to the above recommendations, if you wish to open files created in Chief Architect Version X8 or prior, bear in mind the following:

1. Layer Names

In Chief Architect X8 and prior, turning off the Modify Name in all Layer Sets option made it possible to assign different names to the same layer in different layer sets. In Version X9, this option was no longer supported. When a legacy file is opened in X17, the layer names used in the currently active layer set will be retained and any other layer names in other layer sets will be discarded.

For Files Created in Version X7 and Prior

In addition to the above recommendations, if you wish to open files created in Chief Architect Version X7 or prior, bear in mind the following:

1. Boxed Eaves

   In Chief Architect X8, improvements to the generation of Boxed Eaves ensure that they extend into exterior rooms with "Use Soffit Surface for Ceiling" specified when located between the roof baseline and an interior room. In some legacy plans opened in Version X17, the **Length** value for Boxed Eaves may need to be modified in the Roof Plane Specification dialog.

2. Uppercase Text

   The Uppercase option was added to Text Styles in Version X8, whereas in Version X7 and prior, it was an option for Room Labels and Schedules only. In legacy plans opened in Version X8, any Schedules present in the drawing will be assigned a Custom Text Style, as will their associated Schedule Defaults. If any Schedule Default is set to Use Layer for Text Style and no objects are present on that layer, a new Schedule Text Style will be created and assigned to that layer. Room Labels are treated similarly: if any are present, they and their defaults will use a Custom Text Style. If a given Room Label or Schedule has been sent to layout more than once and was set to use different Text Styles in each layout view, it is possible that its appearance may be affected in some views.

For Files Created in Version X6 and Prior

In addition to the above recommendations, if you wish to open files created in Chief Architect Version X6 or prior, bear in mind the following:

1. Built-in Appliances

   In Chief Architect X6 and prior, some appliance symbols designed to be inserted into base cabinets had incorrect sizing data. In legacy plans opened in Version X17, these appliances will not fit into the cabinet correctly and will need to be replaced. Built-in dishwashers are particularly affected.

2. Formatting of Bulleted and Numbered Lists

   In Version X7, various improvements were made to the way lines of Rich Text are spaced. In legacy plans opened in Version X7, Rich Text objects with bulleted and numbered lists may require adjustments.

3. Chief Blueprint Font

   The Chief Blueprint font was improved for Version X6, with decreased top and bottom spacing. The change in spacing may increase the overall height of text objects using this font in X6 files opened in Version X17. X5 and prior legacy files will not be affected by this change.

For Files Created in Version X5 and Prior

In addition to the above recommendations, if you wish to open files created in Chief Architect Version X5 or prior, bear in mind the following:

1. Name-Value Pairs for Doors and Windows

In Version X6, the NVPs door_style_name, door_type_name, and window_type_name were shortened to style_name and type_name. Any object labels or text macros using these NVPs in legacy plans opened in Version X17 will need to be replaced.

For Files Created in Version X4 and Prior

In addition to the above recommendations, if you wish to open files created in Chief Architect Version X4 or prior, bear in mind the following:

1. Roof Overhangs and Framing

   In Chief Architect X4 and prior, roof overhangs were measured to the outside of the subfascia, whereas in Version X5 and later, they are measured to the outside of the fascia or shadow boards, if present. In legacy plans opened in Version X17, this will not affect the appearance of roof planes in floor plan view because in X4 and prior, roof plane polylines represented the projected framing area whereas in Version X17 they represent the total projected area. But, the position of the fascia and subfascia will shift, as will the length of the rafters.

2. Door Swing Direction and Materials

   In Chief Architect X4 and prior, exterior doors that swing outward displayed the interior material on the exterior side of the door. This was corrected in Version X17. Doors modified to work around the old behavior could be affected in legacy plans opened in Version X17.

3. Door Swing Direction and Louvers

   Improvements to door louver direction may affect louvers in all doors with the exception of bifold doors.

4. Wrapped Door/Window Lintels and Window Sills

   In Chief Architect X4 and prior, wrapped lintels and sills extended out further than those that were not wrapped. In legacy plans opened in Version X17, the extents of wrapped lintels and sills will be adjusted so that they equal their **Extend** setting.

5. Cabinet Feet

   The offsets for cabinet foot millwork symbols in Version X4 and prior were set per millwork symbol to insert into cabinets effectively. In Version X17, the offset is set in the Cabinet Specification dialogs. When legacy plans are opened in Version X17, cabinet foot offsets are set to 0 and transferred to their containing cabinet, if one exists. Any customized or independently placed cabinet feet will be affected.

6. Object Labels in Cross Section/Elevation Views

   If a “Label” layer is turned on in a cross section/elevation view and objects of that type are visible in the view, then those objects’ labels will display in that view when the plan is opened in Version X17.

7. Transparent Materials

   In Chief Architect X4, materials assigned to the Transparent Material Class for ray tracing were visible in rendered views even when their Index of Refraction was set to 1.0. When legacy plans are opened in Version X17, Transparent materials with an Index of Refraction of 1.0 are transferred to the General Material class and assigned a Transparency value of 100%. This will not affect these materials’ appearance in ray trace views, but will make them completely invisible in rendered views.

8. Registered User Text Macros

   In Chief Architect X4 and prior, a selection of Registered User Text Macros could be inserted into Texts, Callouts, and Markers. These macros reported information that was provided when the program was installed and registered on the computer. In Version X5 and later, the program no longer collects registered user information. When a legacy file is opened in Version X17, any Registered User macros inserted into text objects are treated as regular text.

9. Invisible Beams

   The legacy **Invisible Beam** check box was removed from the Wall Specification dialog. When legacy plans are opened in Version X17, any **Invisible Beam** walls will be converted to Invisible Walls.

For Files Created in Version X3 and Prior

In addition to the above recommendations, if you wish to open files created in Chief Architect Version X3 or prior, bear in mind the following:

1. Text Styles

   The appearance of a number of objects that include text - including object labels, the North Pointer, Sun Angles, Joist Direction Lines, the Up/Down arrows for stairs and ramps - can now be controlled using Text Style. Their appearance may be altered somewhat in legacy plans opened in Chief Architect X17.

2. Light Sources

   The illumination created by light fixtures and Added Lights was improved in Chief Architect X17. Lighting in legacy plans may appear noticeably brighter when viewed in version X17.

For Files Created in Version X2 and Prior

If you wish to open files created in Chief Architect Version X2 or prior, bear in mind the following file management changes and structural enhancements:

1. Legacy file formats

   Chief Architect9.5 and prior files were saved in .pl and .la the file formats. These file formats files are no longer supported and cannot be opened in version X17.

2. Material textures, images, and backdrops

   Chief ArchitectX2 and prior installed with a catalog of library content, including a selection of material textures, images, and backdrops. This library catalog is no longer installed with the program because it is now available for download on-demand, so it will be possible to open a legacy plan in version X17 and encounter numerous missing file warnings. To avoid this, we recommend using the **Export Entire Plan** feature in the original program version to create a folder that includes the plan and all associated textures, images, and backdrops before opening this file in X17. This tool is renamed Backup Entire Plan in version X17.

3. Floor and ceiling finish thicknesses

   In Chief Architect X2 and prior, floor and ceiling finish layers were not modeled in 3D, and objects such as railings, stairs, landings, cabinets, fixtures, and furnishings measured their Floor to Bottom height from the subfloor. These objects now measure their Floor to Bottom height from the floor finish surface by default, so it is possible that you may notice height changes for these objects - particularly in saved, annotated cross section/elevation views.

4. Riser heights and landing thicknesses

   The default Best Fit Riser Height for stairs that do not reach the next level has been updated from 9” (225 mm) in version X2 and prior to 6 3/4” (169 mm) in Chief Architect X17. This may affect the riser heights of stairs, as well as the thicknesses of landings attached to those stairs.

5. Auto Adjust Height

   The Follow Terrain option in some specification dialogs was replaced by the Auto Adjust Height check box. If a cabinet, fireplace, fixture, furniture, or other library symbol had Follow Terrain unchecked in version X2 or prior and was located in a room with a floor height other than the default for the current floor, then the object’s Floor to Bottom Height will change to equal that room’s floor height. The object’s position in the model will not change, however.

6. Adjustable Thickness Walls

   In Chief Architect X2 and prior, generic, single-layer Wall Types were available for use. When a legacy plan file is opened in version X17 and these Wall Types are detected, they are replaced by an updated, non-generic Wall Type.

Framed walls and Railings will also acquire 1/2” (13 mm) thick layers of sheetrock on each side. Railings that define a Deck room with Advanced Deck Framing Built will not acquire sheetrock layers.

7. Stairwells defined by railings

   Interior railings that used a generic, single-layer Wall Type drawn in older program versions will acquire layers of sheetrock when the plan is opened in version X17. This can affect the appearance of staircases where they join to a floor platform. To address this issue, select the railing and move it 1/2” (13 mm) away from the top edge of the staircase.

8. Deck rooms

   In legacy plans opened in Chief Architect X17, Deck rooms with Advanced Deck Framing built retain the framing but have Automatic Deck Framing turned off by default. Decks with no Advanced Deck Framing built are converted to Balcony rooms.

9. Material definitions and light sources

   Settings in the Define Material dialog that affect materials’ appearance of brightness have been modified. The **Ambient** setting was removed, and the **Diffuse** setting for materials in legacy plans will be set to 100% when opened in version X17.

   The Quality setting for light sources set to use Soft Shadows in ray tracing was also modified. Lights using Soft Shadows in legacy plans will be set to use Medium quality. The Light Diameter of light sources in legacy plans is capped at 4” (100 mm).

10. Structural Member Reporting

    When a plan created in Chief Architect X2 or prior is opened in Chief Architect X17, Materials Lists are set to calculate **Total Linear Length**. For a combination of linear length and piece count, select **Mixed Reporting** in the Structural Member Reporting dialog.

11. Fill New Framing Members

    In Chief Architect X2 and prior, Fill New Framing Members was view-specific; in Chief Architect X17 it applies to the entire plan. As a result, it is turned off by default in legacy plans opened in version X17.

New and Improved Features by Chapter

The following is a list of new and improved features in Premier Version X17. Where possible, cross-references to additional information are provided.

Program Overview

- New **Account** program menu for license and Chief Architect Cloud account management.
- Enhanced control over the information presented in the Status Bar.
- The Library menu is now available when no view windows are open.

File Management

- New **Chief Architect Project Management** mode prevents broken links to referenced files.
- The Project Browser now has a Filter function as well as Tags.
- Backup Entire Plan/Project have been replaced by Export Project tools.

Preferences and Default Settings

- Improved Angle Snap **Increments** and **Allowed Angles** options in the General Plan/Layout Defaults dialogs.
- New **Find Angles** option in the Preference dialog controls whether the Center Object and Reflect About Object edit tools offer angles as axes.
- The Temporary and Undo Files settings have been removed from the Preferences dialog.
- New Project Browser panel in the Preferences dialog.
- New Project Management panel in the Preferences dialog.
- Material previews can now be set to use Physically Based or Standard rendering.
- Tools for importing plan settings consolidated in new **Import Settings from Plan/Layout**  tool.
- Opening a new plan or layout file when the **Save as Template** tool is used is now optional.

Toolbars and Hotkeys

- New **Choose Icon** option for custom Toolbar Configurations in the Toolbar Customization dialog.

Window and View Tools

- New **Maintain Width**  option for the Tool Palette side window.
- A tool tip now provides information about a plan or layout when you hover over the tab for one of its view windows.

Creating Objects

- New **Restricted Increments** of either 90° or 45° when drawing and rotating objects using Angle Snaps.
- The Enter Coordinates dialog is now available when **Continuous Drawing Mode** is in use.

Displaying Objects

- Different line styles can now be specified for an arrowhead and the CAD object it is attached to.

Editing Objects

- Polylines can now be converted into Driveway objects using the Convert Polyline tool.
- Actions in the Action History side window can now be sorted **New to Old**  and **Old to New**  .

Walls, Railings, and Fencing

- The preview in the Wall Type Definitions dialog no longer has wrapped ends and now shows framing members in framing layers when **Explode Layers**  is used.

Rooms

- The Components panel is now available in the Tray Ceiling Specification dialog.

Dimensions

- New **Dimension Line Separation Snaps** option allows dimension lines to snap to Line Separation and 1st Line Offset locations.
- Dimensions can now be set to locate different types of Electrical objects in the Dimension Defaults dialog.
- Dimensions can now be set to locate newel posts in railings and fencing in both plan and elevation views in the Dimension Defaults dialog.

Doors and Windows

- Most Window Types can now be drawn open in plan and 3D views.

Cabinets

- Improved how Frameless cabinets are modeled.
- New **Side** and **Back Thickness** settings for cabinet boxes.
- New "Appliances (undercounter)" option produces a countertop over a selected fixture provided that it is next to a base cabinet.
- The display and appearance of fixtures inserted into cabinets can now be controlled when those fixtures are on custom layers.
- Fixtures inserted into the sides or back of a cabinet can now display in plan view.

Electrical

- Wall and cabinet mounted Electrical objects can be ganged together using the **Make Ganged Electrical Block** edit tool.
- Electrical objects now have the option to Cut or Insert Into the surface they are mounted to.

Schedules and Object Labels

- Schedules can now wrap to multiple tables.
- Object labels can now display in camera views and overviews.
- The text and punctuation of schedules' **Totals Row Label** can now be specified.
- Secondary column sorting is now supported in schedules.

Foundations

- Stem Wall Height no longer includes sill plates.
- Round Piers and Square Pads can now display when their owner wall does not.

Stairs, Ramps, and Landings

- New **Display on Floor Above** options for stairs, ramps, and landings.

Roofs

- The Build Roof and Roof Defaults dialogs now have the same panels as the Roof Plane Specification dialog, including Line Style, Fill Style, and Label panels.
- Shoe Plates can now be suppressed or included in the Roof Plane Specification dialog.
- Ceiling Planes now have a defaults dialog.
- Roof Planes and Ceiling Planes now have the Set as Default edit button.

Framing and Trusses

- New defaults dialog for Framing Members.
- Manual and automatic framing now have separate defaults dialogs.

Trim and Moldings

- The Same Line Type edit handles are now available for Molding Polylines as well as Leader Lines in camera views.

The Library

- New **Show Section Title Bars** option in the Library Browser.
- **Download Catalog** is now available in the contextual menu when multiple Available Online library items are selected.
- The Name column in the Filter Results panel of the Library Browser can now be sorted.

Symbol Objects

- The labels of fixtures inserted into cabinet fronts can now be edited in their Fixture Specification dialog.

Materials

- New Material Builder dialog integrates Adobe® Substance Player functionality for customizing materials into Chief Architect.
- New **Interactive Material Editor**  streamlines texture mapping on 3D surfaces.
- New Brushed settings allow you to create and customize the appearance of a brushed surface when illuminated by a light source in GPU Ray Trace views.
- Emissive Maps are now supported for General, Translucent, and Transparent materials.

3D Views

- The Leader Line, Rich Text, and Text tools can now be used in camera views.
- The Cross Section Slider dialog is now modeless and will remain open while you work in any view until you choose to close it.
- The obsolete Auto Rebuild Walls/Floors/Ceilings check box has been removed from the 3D View Defaults dialog.

3D Rendering and Ray Tracing

- New **Water** Material Type supports animated waves in Physically Based renderings.
- Sun Angle settings in the Preferences dialog have been replaced by **Geographical Location** settings in the General Plan/Layout Defaults dialogs.
- Sun Angles can now be created and deleted via the Adjust Sunlight dialog.
- The **Hide Camera-Facing Exterior Walls** setting now hides wall-mounted objects like electrical as well as Wall and Full Height cabinets snapped to a hidden wall.
- New **Adjust Brightness** edit tool for light fixtures and Added Lights allows you to dim a light without affecting its Intensity setting.
- Obsolete Update View button removed from the WATERCOLOR panel of the Rendering Technique Options dialog.
- Physically Based and Clay Rendering are now only available on systems that support GPU Ray Tracing.
- The obsolete CPU Ray Tracing tool has been retired in favor of real-time GPU Ray Tracing.

Pictures, Images, and Walkthroughs

- New **Stationary Walkthrough** tool.
- New **Sunlight** controls in the Walkthrough Path Specification dialog and Walkthrough Preview side window.
- Walkthrough Paths now have a **Pause Key Frame** option.
- Sun Angles can now be specified for Key Frames in the Walkthrough Path Specification dialog and Walkthrough Preview side window.
- Sun Angles can now be created and deleted via the Walkthrough Options dialog for Stationary Walkthroughs.
- The Define button was removed from the Walkthrough Options dialog for Walkthrough Paths.
- Key Frames can now be group-selected in the Walkthrough Path Specification dialog and Walkthrough Preview side window.
- The obsolete Export VRML tool has been removed from the program.

Importing and Exporting

- Multiple .dxf/.dwg files can now be imported as a group.
- An imported .dxf/.dwg files can now be imported as a CAD Block.

Terrain

- New **Place Terrain Elevation Reference Point** edit tool provides enhanced control of where terrain elevation relative to the structure.

Layout

- When the current camera view is sent to layout as an image, its size can now be defined.

Ruby in Chief Architect

- New %is_drawn_closed_in_2d% and %is_drawn_closed_in_3d% NVPs for Windows and %perimeter% NVP for Rooms.