

# What's New in Chief Architect X7

Welcome to Chief Architect X7. This guide has been written to help our upgrading customers make a smooth transition from earlier versions of Chief Architect to Chief Architect X7.

## Contents

- Before You Begin
- New and Improved Features

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## Before You Begin

There are many new features in Chief Architect X7, and many existing features have changed. These changes affect the way Chief Architect functions, so it is very important to be familiar with them.

- Getting Started Check List on page 1
- Files Created in Version X6 and Prior on page 3
- For Files Created in Version X5 and Prior on page 4
- For Files Created in Version X4 and Prior on page 4
- For Files Created in Version X3 and Prior on page 5
- For Files Created in Version X2 and Prior on page 5

Chief Architect X7 can open the **.plan**, **.layout**, **.PL1**, and **.LA1** files from prior versions. 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. For details, see For Files Created in Version X3 and Prior on page 5, For Files Created in Version X2 and Prior on page 5.

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.

## Getting Started Check List

The following checklist suggests steps you should take before migrating your files to Chief Architect X7. More information about each of these steps can be found after the checklist.

- 1. Check for and Install Program Updates
- 2. Migrate Legacy Library Files
- 3. Migrate Custom Graphics Files
- 4. Review the New Features List

- 5. Review Your Preferences Settings
- 6. Create new custom Template Plan and Layout files
- 7. Set up Custom Toolbar Configurations
- 8. Backup Entire Plan
- 9. Check [www.chiefarchitect.com](http://www.chiefarchitect.com) for more information

### 1. Check for and Install Program Updates

Program updates contain improvements to the original release version and we recommend using the most current version available. By default, Chief Architect checks for program updates every day when you launch the program. Please note that program updates are available for download, which means that you need internet access to acquire them.

You can check for updates at any time:

- Select **Help> Download Program Updates** from the menu.
- Visit the Program Updates page on the Chief Architect Web site at [www.chiefarchitect.com](http://www.chiefarchitect.com).

### 2. Migrate Legacy Library Files

Library content from previous program versions cannot be installed or copied into the Chief Architect X7 library. If you upgraded from version X1 or later and have custom library content on your computer from that program version, the program installer will locate it and ask if you want to migrate it into the Chief Architect X7 library.

You can import library files from versions X1 through X5 at any time by selecting **Library> Import Library (.calib, .calibz)** from the program menu. In addition, library files from versions 10 and prior can be imported by selecting **Library> Convert Legacy (.alb) Library Files** from the program menu.

### 3. Migrate Custom Graphics Files

If you have custom graphics files, including textures, images or backdrops, that you were using in a previous program version, you can copy them manually using your operating system for use in Chief Architect X7.

- Copy custom texture files to the Chief Architect X7 Textures folder located in the Chief Architect X7 Data folder.
- Copy custom image files to your Chief Architect X7 Images folder located in the Chief Architect X7 Data folder.
- Copy custom backdrop files to your Chief Architect X7 Backdrops folder located in the Chief Architect X7 Data folder.

In Chief Architect X5 through X1, custom graphics were saved in the Chief Architect Data folder, as they are in version X7. In version 10 and prior, 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.

### 4. Review the New Features List

There are a number of important reasons why you should familiarize yourself with the new and improved features in Chief Architect X7:

- 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 on page 6.

#### 5. **Review Your Preferences Settings**

Any changes that you made to the Preferences settings in your previous version do not migrate into Chief Architect X7. You should review all the settings in the **Preferences** dialog to make sure that they are set to suit your drawing needs.

#### 6. **Create new custom Template Plan and Layout files**

Chief Architect X7 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. For best results, it is recommended that you either:

- Use the installed templates when creating new plans and layout files in Chief Architect X7
- Use the installed templates as the basis for creating new custom templates.

If you choose to continue using custom template files that you created in a previous program version, it is very important that you take the time to carefully review all the default settings in the file, making sure that they will continue to suit your needs in X7. First, make copies of your custom templates in the Chief Architect X7 Templates directory. The Templates directory is located in the Chief Architect X7 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 X7 and that their line weight scales do not conflict with those in your template plans.

#### 7. **Set up Custom Toolbar Configurations**

It is possible to migrate toolbar configuration files from previous versions to Chief Architect X7; however, it is not recommended because it is likely that you will be missing new tools available in version X7.

Instead, we recommend that you set up your custom toolbars the way you would like them in Chief Architect X7. You may find it most effective to customize your toolbars as you get used to working in the new program version, rather than beforehand.

#### 8. **Backup Entire Plan**

Before migrating a legacy file created in Chief Architect X5 or prior, it is a good idea to open the plan in the program version in which it was created and use the Backup Entire Plan tool (Export Entire Plan in version X3 and prior) to export the plan with all associated support files, including textures, backdrops and images.

#### 9. **Check [www.chiefarchitect.com](http://www.chiefarchitect.com) for more information**

If you have additional questions about the changes in Chief Architect, up to date information is available in the Support section of our web site. You can also post questions on the Chief Talk web forum at [www.chieftalk.com](http://www.chieftalk.com).

### **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 before you open legacy files in Chief Architect X7.

#### 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 X7, 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 X7. 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 before you open legacy files in Chief Architect X7.

1. **Named Values for Doors and Windows**

In Version X6, the Named Values `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 Named Values in legacy plans opened in Version X7 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 before you open legacy files in Chief Architect X7.

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, they are measured to the outside of the fascia or shadow boards, if present. In legacy plans opened in Version X5, 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 X5 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 display interior material on exterior side of door. This was corrected in Version X7. Doors modified to work around the old behavior could be affected in legacy plans opened in Version X5.

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 X7, 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 X7, the offset is set in the **Cabinet Specification** dialogs. When legacy plans are opened in Version X5, 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 X7.

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 X7, 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. Invisible Beams**

The legacy **Invisible Beam** checkbox was removed from the **Wall Specification** dialog. When legacy plans are opened in Version X7, 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 before you open legacy files in Chief Architect X7.

**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 X7.

**2. Light Sources**

The illumination created by light fixtures and Added Lights was improved in Chief Architect X7. Lighting in legacy plans may appear noticeably brighter when viewed in version X7.

### **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 before you open legacy files in Chief Architect X7.

**1. Material textures, images, and backdrops**

Chief Architect X2 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 X7 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 X7. This tool is renamed Backup Entire Plan in version X7.

**2. 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.

**3. 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 X7.

**4. Auto Adjust Height**

The Follow Terrain option in some specification dialogs was replaced by the Auto Adjust Height checkbox. 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.

**5. 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 X7 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.

6. **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 X7. 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.

7. **Deck rooms**

In legacy plans opened in Chief Architect X7, 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.

8. **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 X7.

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).

9. **Structural Member Reporting**

When a plan created in Chief Architect X2 or prior is opened in Chief Architect X7, Materials Lists are set to calculate **Total Lineal Length**. For a combination of lineal length and piece count, select **Mixed Reporting** in the **Structural Member Reporting** dialog.


10. **Fill New Framing Members**

In Chief Architect X2 and prior, Fill New Framing Members was view-specific; in Chief Architect X7 it applies to the entire plan. As a result, it is turned off by default in legacy plans opened in version X7.

## New and Improved Features

The following is a list of new and improved features in Chief Architect Version X7.

### Program Overview



- New **Line Weights**  toggle for specification dialog preview panes.

### File Management

- Plan Databases can no longer be accessed in the Chief Architect Viewer and Home Designer programs.

### Preferences and Default Settings


- The **Sun Angle** and **Line Properties** settings in the **Preferences** dialog were moved to the CAD panel.
- New **Dialog Previews** setting allows you to choose whether Standard or Vector View dialog previews are used by default.








- Obsolete **Use Triangles**, **Smooth Faces**, **Use Transparency**, and **Optimizations On** settings were removed from the **Preferences**  dialog.
- Enhanced settings in the **Preferences** dialog.
- The  tool is now available for walls and electrical objects.

### Layers


- New **Active Layer Display Options** side window.

### Editing Objects


- New **Object Eyedropper**  tool lets you apply selected attributes of one object to another, similar object.
- The **Select Same Type** and **Load Values to Make Same** edit tools have been renamed **Match Properties** and **Apply Properties**, respectively.

- The **Match Properties** and **Apply Properties** edit tools are now available for more objects, including framing and CAD.
- The **Match Properties** dialog now has a **Search** field.
- New **Fillet All Corners**  and **Chamfer All Corners**  edit tools.
- New **Fillet Radius**  and **Chamfer Distance**  edit tools replace double-clicking the Fillet Lines or Chamfer Lines buttons.
- **Sticky Mode**  is now available for the **Fillet Lines**  and **Chamfer Lines**  edit tools.
- The **Delete Objects** dialog was redesigned for greater ease of use.
- The **Delete Objects** dialog can now be used to delete schedules.

## Walls, Railings, and Fencing

- The **Wall Type Definitions** dialog has been redesigned for greater ease of use.
- An individual wall can now have multiple framed layers with or without staggered studs.
- The **Set as Default**  edit tool is now available for walls with the exception of Pony Walls.
- Framed walls are automatically assigned a label when wall framing is built. Custom labels can also be specified.
- The Same Wall Type edit handles are now available for curved walls.
- The **Follow Stairs** option is now available for Solid railings.

## Rooms


- New Deck Support panel in the **Room Specification** dialog with enhanced settings for deck beams, deck posts, and deck post footings.
- New default layers for Deck Beams, Deck Posts, and Deck Post Footings.
- New **Make Living Area Polyline**  edit tool creates a polyline showing the extents of the Living Area.

## Doors and Windows

- Window heights can now be measured from the floor finish rather than the subfloor.

- Improved ability to apply door handles and locks directly from the Library Browser.
- Handles and locks can now be assigned to Pocket Doors.
- Labels for doors placed in railings now display.



## Foundations

- New settings in the specification dialog for Round Piers and Square Pads.
- New **Count** setting in the **Build Foundation** dialog lets you specify the number of automatically generated treated sill plates.
- Can now choose to lock a curved roof plane's Radius to Roof Surface or its Angle at Ridge when using the **Join Roof Planes**  edit tool.




## Roofs

- The **Square Cut** and **Plumb Cut** options in the **Build Roof** dialog now apply to Roof Trusses.

## Stairs, Ramps, and Landings

- New **Railing on Selected Edge**  and **Remove Railing from Selected Edge**  edit tools for Landings.


## Framing

- New **Post with Footing**  tool.
- New defaults dialogs for posts and beams.
- Posts can now be specified as **Treated** and can be assigned a cross box in floor plan view.
- Posts now display in front of beams in floor plan view.
- The wall framing for bay, box, and bow windows now displays in floor plan view.
- **Lookout Spacing** can now be specified in the **Build Framing** dialog.
- When the thickness and depth of wall studs are equal, only a single stud is created at wall corners.
- Improved rough opening framing for Pocket Doors.
- New **Join and Lap Ends**  and **Join and Mitre Ends**  edit tools.
- Framing members can now display labels.



## Trusses

- New **Open Truss Detail**  edit tool for Floor/Ceiling and Roof Trusses.

## Electrical

- All specification settings are now saved when an Electrical object is added to the library.
- Can now specify the default layer for electrical objects.
- The **Reverse Symbol** option is now available for Electrical objects.
- The default library object for 220V Outdoor Outlets can now be specified.
- A default electrical object's specification dialog can now be accessed in the **Electrical Defaults** dialog.
- The **Electrical Defaults** dialog can now be accessed by double-clicking the Outlet, Light, or Switch toolbar buttons.
- The **Set as Default**  edit tool is now available for electrical objects.

## Trim and Moldings

- New **Add Molding to Selected Edge**  and **Remove Molding from Selected Edge**  edit tools for Molding Polylines.


## Cabinets

- Cabinet face items can now be split vertically as well as horizontally to produce a wide variety of custom configurations.
- Obsolete **Double** and **Triple Face** options were removed from the **Cabinet Specification** dialogs.
- The **Diagonal Door** and **Lazy Susan** settings were moved to the General panel of the **Cabinet Specification** dialogs.
- The **Stiles Between Double Doors** setting was moved to the Door/Drawer panel of the **Cabinet Specification** dialogs.
- Enhanced interface for positioning cabinet drawer handles.
- Cabinet drawer sizes in the Materials List now reflect the size of the drawer box instead of the drawer front.
- A cabinet's toe kick material can now be specified.

## Other Objects

- New **Ignore Room Moldings** option for Soffits.
- **Wall Material Regions** and **Custom Backsplashes** can now be rotated in floor plan view.
- Primitive objects now have preview panes and enhanced **Rotation** controls in their specification dialogs.


## The Library

- Electrical object previews in the Library Browser now use 3D symbols rather than 2D CAD blocks when viewed at folder level.
- Custom symbols can now be imported directly into a specific folder in the User Catalog.
- The **Replace from Library**  tool can now be used to replace one object with a larger one that does not fit in the available space.




## Materials

- The **Select Material** dialog now includes Plan Materials.
- Color Saturation and Luminance are now described using percentages.

## View and Window Tools

- **Fill Window Building Only**  now excludes the terrain in cross section/elevation views.

## 3D Views

- The camera symbols associated with cross section/elevation cameras can now be moved from one floor to another using the **Up One Floor**  or **Down One Floor**  buttons.
- Cross section/elevation views can now have stepped cutting planes.
- Cross section/elevation views now have Resize Clip Plane edit handles regardless of the type of plan view symbol used.
- The **Auto Detail**  tool is now available in all Rendering Techniques.

## Rendering and Ray Tracing

- **Compute Caustics** is now turned off by default for most Outdoor Ray Trace Configurations created using the **Ray Trace Assistant**.






- Sun Angles now have **Make Shadow**  and **Delete Shadow**  edit buttons.


## Dimensions

- Dimensions can now be set to locate cabinet countertops, backsplashes, toe kicks, and moldings
- Auto Exterior Dimensions can now be set to **Ignore Interior Walls**.

## Text, Callouts, and Markers

- If a **Leader Line**  or **Text Line with Arrow**  is drawn with its tail end snapped to a text object, it will be placed on the same layer as the text object and inherit all of that layer's attributes.
- Improved handling of formatted text pasted into **Rich Text**  from an outside application.

## CAD Objects

- New **Same Line Type** edit handles let you draw a line segment beginning at the end of a selected CAD line, arc, open polyline, or spline and sharing its line color, weight, style, and more.
- New transparent Arrow styles available for CAD objects and dimensions.
- The transparency of fill pattern lines can now be specified.
- When used in floor plan view, the **Delete Temporary Points**  tool now deletes all temporary CAD points on all floors.

## Project Management

- Space Planning room boxes now have a specification dialog: their names, line and fill styles can be modified.
- The names of Wall Details in the Project Browser now correspond to each wall's label.

## Pictures, Images, and Walk-throughs

- The size and resolution of an exported picture can now be specified, as can a transparent backdrop.


## Importing and Exporting

- Improved handling of texture mapping and shading in COLLADA exports.

## Custom Symbols

- New **Insert into Terrain Hole** option in the **Symbol Specification** dialog.

## Schedules and Object Labels

- Objects listed in schedules can now be limited to those found in a specific room.
- New **Create Schedule from Room**  edit tool lets you create a schedule for the contents of a selected room.
- When rooms included in a Room Finish Schedule have identical objects in them, their total count will be stated in the Totals row.

## Ruby Console

- New named values for framing objects and walls.