What's New in Chief Architect X9

Welcome to Chief Architect X9. This guide has been written to help our upgrading customers make a smooth transition from earlier versions of Chief Architect to Chief Architect X9.

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Before You Begin

There are many new features in Chief Architect X9, and many existing features have changed. These changes affect the way Chief Architect functions, so it is very important to be familiar with them.

Chief Architect X9 can open the **.plan** and **.layout** files from prior versions. Files with the older .pl and .la file extensions are no longer supported and cannot be opened by Chief Architect X9. 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 Files Created in Version X7 and Prior on

page 5, For Files Created in Version X2 and Prior on page 7.

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 X9, an unaltered copy of the original file is created in the Chief Architect X9 Data folder, under Archives, which can still be opened in the original version.

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 X9. More information about each of these steps can be found after the checklist.

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

2.   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 X9:

• 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 9.

3. Migrate Legacy Library Files

Library content from previous program versions cannot be installed or copied into the Chief Architect X9 library. If you have Chief Architect version X5 through X8 installed on your computer, the **Migrate Settings** dialog will display after you activate the license, allowing you to migrate Preference settings, toolbars, library content, and more for use in Chief Architect X9. 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. In addition, library files from versions 10 and prior can be imported by selecting **Library> Convert Legacy (.alb) Library Files** from the program menu.

4. 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 X9.

- Copy custom texture files to the Chief Architect X9 Textures folder located in the Chief Architect X9 Data folder.

- Copy custom image files to your Chief Architect X9 Images folder located in the Chief Architect X9 Data folder.

- Copy custom backdrop files to your Chief Architect X9 Backdrops folder located in the Chief Architect X9 Data folder.

In Chief Architect X8 through X1, custom graphics were saved in the Chief Architect Data folder, as they are in version X9. 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.

5. Review Your Preferences Settings

Although you can migrate your Preferences settings from Versions X5 through X8 into Version X9, the settings that are available in Version X9 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.

6. Create new custom Template Plan and Layout files

Chief Architect X9 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 X9, for best results it is recommended that you either:

•   Use the installed templates when creating new plans and layout files in Chief Architect X9

•   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 X9. First, make copies of your custom templates in the Chief Architect X9 Templates directory The Templates directory is located in the Chief Architect X9 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 X9 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 X9; however, it is possible that your migrated toolbars will be missing new tools available in Version X9.

We recommend that you set up your custom toolbars the way you would like them in Chief Architect X9. 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 X8 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 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.

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 before you open legacy files in Chief Architect X9.

☐ 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 is no longer supported. When a legacy file is opened in X9, 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.

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 before you open legacy files in Chief Architect X9.

☐ 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 X9, 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.

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 X9.

☐ 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 X9, 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 X9. 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 X9.

☐ 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 X9 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 X9.

☐ 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 X9, 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 X9 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 X9. 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 X9, 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 X9, 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 X9.

☐ 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 X9, 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** check box was removed from the **Wall Specification** dialog. When legacy plans are opened in Version X9, 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 X9.

☐ 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 X9.

☐ 2. Light Sources

The illumination created by light fixtures and Added Lights was improved in Chief Architect X9. Lighting in legacy plans may appear noticeably brighter when viewed in version X9.

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 X9.

☐ 1.   Legacy file formats

Chief Architect 9.5 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 X9.

☐ 2.   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 X9 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 X9. This tool is renamed Backup Entire Plan in version X9.

☐ 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 X9.

☐ 5.   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.

☐ 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 X9 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.

☐ 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 X9. 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 X9, 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 X9.

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 X9, 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.

☐ 11. Fill New Framing Members

In Chief Architect X2 and prior, Fill New Framing Members was view-specific; in Chief Architect X9 it applies to the entire plan. As a result, it is turned off by default in legacy plans opened in version X9.

New and Improved Features

The following is a list of new and improved features in Chief Architect Version X9.

Installation

• New **Migrate Settings** dialog lets you migrate Preference settings, toolbars, library content, and more into the current program version.
• Obsolete Migrate Library Catalogs dialog was replaced by the **Migrate Settings** dialog.
• 32-bit program versions will no longer be offered.

Program Overview

• New support for touch screen gestures.

File Management

• Opening files with .pl and .la file extensions is no longer supported.
• The Backup Entire Plan tool can now save files in folders that contain other files.
• Multiple picture files can now be imported as a group.

Preferences and Default Settings

• New Layout Background Color setting in the **Preferences** dialog.

- Multiple Saved Defaults can be selected and edited as a group.
- New Texture Compression troubleshooting option in the **Preferences** dialog.
- New Record Timing Log troubleshooting option in the **Preferences** dialog.
- New Mouse Movement Optimizations and Mouse Scroll Sensitivity settings in the **Preferences** dialog, only available in the Mac version of the software.
- Removed obsolete Shared Patterns folder setting from the FOLDERS panel of the **Preferences** dialog.
- Removed obsolete settings from the RENDER panel of the **Preferences** dialog.
- Removed obsolete LAYERS panel from the **Preferences** dialog.

Toolbars and Hotkeys

- New Button Size option in the **Preferences** dialog lets you control the size of the toolbar buttons without adjusting your system settings.

Displaying Objects

- Enhanced Select Drawing Group ▣ edit tools let you move objects to different Drawing Groups.

Editing Objects

- New options in the **Delete Objects** dialog.
- Camera symbols in floor plan view can now be selected using an Edit Area marquee.
- Improved speed of Undo operations.

CAD Objects

- The **CAD Block Management** dialog now has an object preview and an Add to Library button.
- The **Revision Cloud Specification** dialog now has an object preview.

Walls, Railings, and Fencing

- Improved feedback provides warning when walls have a connection problem.
- New feedback provides warning when walls are drawn at irregular angles.

Rooms

- New **Room Type Defaults** dialogs.
- New **Floor/Ceiling Platform Defaults** dialog.
- New Shelf Ceiling option creates a plant shelf over a selected room.
- The default Ceiling Structure and Finish can now be specified for all room types.

Text, Callouts, and Markers

- The Legacy Compatible Size option for Text Styles is now only available in legacy files in instances where it is actually in use.

Doors and Windows

- New **Wall Niche** tool.
- It is now possible to specify zero trimmers for doors and windows.
- The default door and window casing can now be replaced directly from the library.

Cabinets

- Cabinet doors and drawers can now be drawn open in 2D and 3D views.
- Cabinet door style, drawer style, and hardware can now be customized for individual cabinet face items.
- Separate countertop overhangs can now be specified for each side of a base cabinet.
- New **Always Present** option for cabinet toe kicks with Closed Toes.
- Custom Countertops can now be located by dimensions in cross section/elevation views.
- Custom Countertops now have an object preview in their specification dialog.
- New option to prevent an automatic cabinet filler from generating in the space between two cabinets that meet at only one corner.

Electrical

- Switches and outlets can now be snapped to cabinet boxes and soffits. Lights can be snapped to the sides of soffits, as well.

Schedules and Object Labels

- New available columns for Cabinet and Room Finish Schedules.
- New 3D Object Preview Options for Door and Window Schedules.
- Code, Comment, Description, and Manufacturer information can now be specified in the specification dialog for most objects rather than the Components dialog.

Foundations

- Brick ledges can now be automatically generated in stem walls and grade beams.
- The **Slab Specification** dialog now has an object preview.

Stairs, Ramps, and Landings

- New **L-Shaped Stairs** and **U-Shaped Stairs** tools.
- The railings on Landings can now be specified.
- Stair, ramp, and landing railings can now use panels as well as a middle rail.
- Newel and baluster spacing can now be specified for stairs, ramps, and landings.
- Drawing previews now display for most Stair Tools.
- Improved control over top and bottom rails on stairs, ramps, and landings.
- Improved snapping of stairs to walls as they are drawn and edited.
- The Click Stairs tool was renamed **Straight Stairs**, while the Straight Stairs tool was renamed **Draw Stairs**.

- The **Stair Landing Specification** dialog now has an object preview.
- The Newels at First Tread check box was replaced by a Has Newel Posts option that affects all newels.

Roofs

- New **Flush Eave** option produces boxed eaves that are flush with the adjacent exterior wall.
- New Elevation Reference option for manually drawn Ceiling Planes .
- Obsolete Rebuild Walls/Floors/Ceilings and Build Fascia and Roof Trim settings removed from the **Build Roof** dialog.

Framing

- Treated Sill Plates are no longer specified in the **Foundation Defaults** dialog and can now instead be specified on a wall by wall basis.

The Library

- Improved Library Search.
- Improved functionality and feedback when replacing an object with an item from the library.

Materials

- Multiple components can now be selected and edited on the Materials panel of object specification and defaults dialogs.
- New Retain Aspect Ratio option in the **Define Material** dialog for material textures.

3D Views

- Camera views and overviews can now be copied and pasted.
- New **Ambient Occlusion** and **Bloom** options add realism to 3D views.
- Shadows and reflections are now enabled and disabled for individual cameras.
- Removed obsolete Brighten Ceilings option from the **3D View Defaults** dialog.

Rendering and Ray Tracing

- New **Toggle Shadows** and **Toggle Reflections** tools.
- Removed obsolete Final View and Final View with Shadows tools.
- Improved program performance in 3D views with shadows.
- New **Save as 360° Panorama** option for ray trace views creates a spherical image that can be viewed in a variety of other applications.
- Bump maps can now be used in camera views.
- New **Use Normal Map** option for materials.
- Removed obsolete Export to POV-Ray option.

Importing and Exporting

- New **Export 360 Panorama** option for Standard rendered views creates a spherical image that can be viewed in a variety of other applications.

Materials List

- Materials Lists can now be exported for use in BuilderTREND software.

Layout

- Layout pages can now be moved by dragging and dropping in the Project Browser.

Printing and Plotting

- The **Save as PDF File** dialog no longer populates the File name field with a name that includes the view type.

Ruby Console

- New named values for the cabinets, rooms, and the current layer set.
- New named values for floor number, Drawing Order, and layer line and text style properties.