

Restoring Chief Architect Content Using Traditional File Management

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This article also applies to the following legacy products:
Pro | Architectural | Suite

QUESTION

I am using X16, Home Designer 2025, or a prior version, or Traditional File Management in X17. How can I restore the user content that I have backed up?

ANSWER

Backing up your important files is an essential practice that you should do regularly because in the event of a computer malfunction, you can be assured that your valuable data has not been lost. Backed up files are also useful when you need to set up a new computer system. But, you can only restore data if you have taken the necessary measures to back it up. Please see the "Backing Up Chief Architect Content Using Traditional File Management" resource in the [Related Articles](#) section to learn more about backing up your Chief Architect/Home Designer files.

Note: If you're using Project Management in X17, please see the "Backing Up and Restoring Chief Architect Content Using Project Management" resource in the [Related Articles](#) section instead.

There are different types of Chief Architect/Home Designer files that you can restore, including:

- [The software](#)
- [Core, bonus, and manufacturer Catalogs](#)
- [User catalog](#)
- [Plan and layout files](#)
- [Other user content \(templates, archives, toolbars, hotkeys, and more\)](#)

When restoring backed up files, it is helpful to know how to copy and paste files in your operating system's file system. There are several ways, and all are easy.

When restoring files associated with Chief Architect or Home Designer, it is important that the software not be running.

To copy and paste files

1. Open the File Explorer in Windows or Finder in macOS, navigate to a file you would like to copy to the system Clipboard, and select it.
2. If you would like to select multiple files, hold down the **Ctrl** key on your keyboard if you're using Windows, or the **Command** key if you're using a Mac, then click on additional files to add them to your selection.
3. Copy the selected file or files to the Clipboard:
 - On Windows, click the **Copy** button in the Home ribbon, right-click and select **Copy** from the contextual menu, or press **Ctrl + C**.
 - On macOS, select **Edit> Copy** from the menu bar, right-click (Control-click) and select **Copy** from the contextual menu, or press **Command + C**.

On a Mac, hold down the Control key while clicking to initiate a right-click command. More information about right-click commands on Apple input devices can be found in the following Apple resource: [Right-click on Mac \(https://support.apple.com/guide/mac-help/right-click-mh35853/mac#\)](https://support.apple.com/guide/mac-help/right-click-mh35853/mac#).

4. Once they are copied to the Clipboard, navigate to the location where you would like to paste a copy of the selected file(s).
5. Paste the selected file or files:
 - On Windows, click the **Paste** button in the Home ribbon, right-click and select **Paste** from the contextual menu, or press **Ctrl + V**.
 - On macOS, select **Edit> Paste Item** from the menu bar, right-click and select **Paste Item** from the contextual menu, or press **Command + V**.

To restore the software

In order to restore or install your Chief Architect or Home Designer software, you need to run its installer file on a supported Windows or macOS system.

You can download the installer file associated with your program version by accessing the [Digital Locker \(https://accounts.chiefarchitect.com/digital-locker/\)](https://accounts.chiefarchitect.com/digital-locker/) area within your [Online Chief Architect Account \(https://accounts.chiefarchitect.com/\)](https://accounts.chiefarchitect.com/).

1. Once downloaded, open the Chief Architect or Home Designer installer file.
 - On Windows, the installer may look like the icon below:



- On macOS, the installer may look like the icon below:



Note: The name of the file will vary depending on what version of the program installer you have, but in general, the file name will begin with the product title, followed by a version number, and ending with the .msi file extension on Windows, and .dmg on a Mac.

2. The Setup Wizard will appear. Click **Next**.
3. Read the *End User License Agreement* carefully, agree to the terms, then click **Install** to proceed with the installation process.
4. Once the program has been installed successfully, click **Finish**.

For information on installing your Chief Architect program on multiple computers, please see the [Related Articles](#) section below.

You can now open the Chief Architect or Home Designer program; but, if you want to utilize backed up content and/or user settings, you may want to restore that data first.


To restore the core, bonus, and manufacturer Catalogs

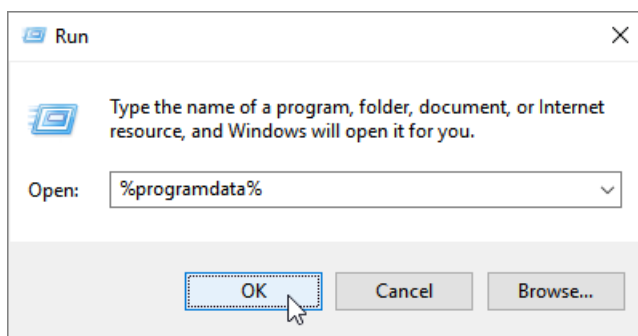
It's important that the Chief Architect or Home Designer program is not running when you perform the steps below.

1. Browse to the file location where you saved your library backups.
2. Select the folder or folders you wish to restore. These folders may include one or more of the following:
 - Bonus Libraries
 - Core Libraries
 - Manufacturer Data
 - Manufacturer Libraries

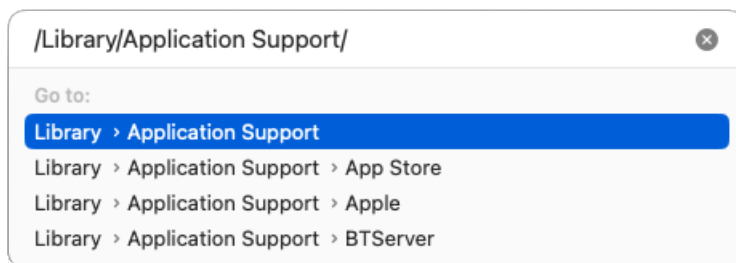
- Referenced Files

Do NOT back up or restore the Program_Data folder or the dont_change.dat file. They contain unique, encrypted registration information and if you try to use a copied and pasted version of either, your license registration will not be recognized by our registration server.

3. When the folders are selected as a group, copy them to the Clipboard, as described [above](#).
4. Next, navigate to the default location for Chief Architect/Home Designer's library content:
 - On Windows, press the **Windows Key**  and the letter **R** on your keyboard at the same time to open the **Run** dialog. Type `%programdata%` and then click **OK** to open the **Program Data** folder.



- On macOS, open Finder, select **Go > Go to Folder**, type: `/Library/Application Support` then click **Return**.




Note: If you have changed the location of the "System Library Database Folder", you will want to instead navigate to your custom file location instead.

5. Look for a folder with the name of the program and version that you want to restore data to and open it.

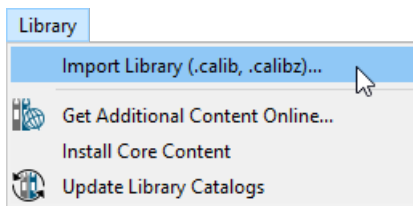
For example, "Chief Architect Premier X17" or "Home Designer Pro 2026".

6. Paste the copied folders to that location, as described [above](#).
7. If a folder with the same name exists in this location, a message will prompt you to either **Replace** the existing folder, **Skip** this folder and keep the existing one, or **Stop** the pasting process completely. Choose **Replace** to paste your backed up folder.

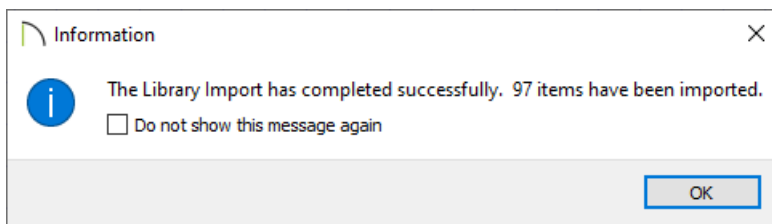
8. Open the Chief Architect or Home Designer program and verify that all of your catalogs are present in the **Library Browser** .

To restore the user catalog

1. Launch the Chief Architect or Home Designer program and create a **New Plan** .
2. In the newly created plan, navigate to **Library> Import Library** from the menu.




3. Browse to the location where you saved the backup of your user catalog.
4. Select the library (*.calibz or *.calib) file and click **Open**.
5. Once imported, an Information message will display saying that the library has been imported successfully. Click **OK**.





To restore plan and layout* files

**Layout files are not available in Home Designer Suite or Home Designer Architectural.*

1. In Windows File Explorer or Finder, navigate to the location where you backed up your plan, layout, or project files.
2. Copy the file(s) that you want to restore, navigate to a local file location on your system, then paste the file(s), as described [above](#).

3. If the files are part of a project (.caproj) file, navigate to **File> Import> Import Project**  within your software, select the project file, then click **Open**. An **Information** dialog will display stating "Select a location to unpackage the Project." Click **Browse** and choose a local file location to unpackage the files into. All plan and layout files contained within the project will then open in the software automatically.

If the files are part of a compressed (zipped) folder, the folder will need to be extracted before the plan and layout files can be opened. Follow the instructions that apply to your operating system below, then use the **Open Plan**  and/or **Open Layout**  tools to open your files.

- On Windows, right-click on the compressed (zipped) folder and choose **Extract All**. In the dialog that appears, specify the desired location that you would like the files to be extracted to, then click **Extract**.
- On macOS, double-click on the compressed (zipped) folder. The extracted folder will appear beside/on top of the original compressed folder.

Other user content (templates, archives, toolbars, hotkeys, and more)

It's important that the Chief Architect or Home Designer program is closed prior to following the steps below.

1. Browse to the location where you backed up the user content located in the program's Data folder.
2. Select the files or folders you wish to restore. These may include one or more of the following:
 - Archives
 - Backdrops
 - Database Libraries
 - Hotkeys
 - Images
 - lex
 - Patterns
 - Scripts
 - Templates
 - Textures
 - Toolbars
 - mmaster.mat
 - sheetSizes.sheet
 - _MigrateBackup
3. When the files and/or folders are selected as a group, copy them to the Clipboard, as described [above](#).
4. Browse to the Data folder that your Chief Architect or Home Designer program is now referencing:
 - On Windows, the default file path for this folder may be one of the following, but may vary depending on your product and version:

C:\Users\ [YOUR USERNAME] \Documents\Chief Architect Premier X17 Data

C:\Users\ [YOUR USERNAME] \Documents\Home Designer Pro 2026 Data

- On macOS, the default file path for this folder may be one of the following, but may vary depending on your product and version:

/Users/ [YOUR USERNAME] /Documents/Chief Architect Premier X17 Data

/Users/ [YOUR USERNAME] /Documents/Home Designer Pro 2026 Data

Note: If you have moved your Chief Architect/Home Designer Data folder to a custom file location, refer to the location you have moved it to instead. If you have forgotten where the Data folder was moved to, navigate into the Preferences dialog, select the Folders panel, and access the file path next to the "My Data Folder" or "Data Folder for Current User" heading.

5. Paste the selected files and/or folders, as described above. Make sure that all files and folders have the same names as the originals.

If you're prompted to overwrite files and folders that have the same name, proceed with caution as any data that will be overwritten will be lost and may be impossible to recover.

Related Articles

[Backing Up and Restoring Chief Architect Content Using Project Management](https://www.chiefarchitect.com/support/article/KB-03211/backing-up-and-restoring-chief-architect-content-using-project-management.html)

[\(https://www.chiefarchitect.com/support/article/KB-03211/backing-up-and-restoring-chief-architect-content-using-project-management.html\)](https://www.chiefarchitect.com/support/article/KB-03211/backing-up-and-restoring-chief-architect-content-using-project-management.html)

[Backing Up Chief Architect Content Using Traditional File Management \(/support/article/KB-00001/backing-up-chief-architect-content-using-traditional-file-management.html\)](/support/article/KB-00001/backing-up-chief-architect-content-using-traditional-file-management.html)

[Enabling or Disabling Project Management \(https://www.chiefarchitect.com/support/article/KB-03210/enabling-or-disabling-project-management.html\)](https://www.chiefarchitect.com/support/article/KB-03210/enabling-or-disabling-project-management.html)

[Exporting Projects and Disconnected Files \(https://www.chiefarchitect.com/support/article/KB-03212/exporting-projects-and-disconnected-files.html\)](https://www.chiefarchitect.com/support/article/KB-03212/exporting-projects-and-disconnected-files.html)

[Organizing your Plan and Layout Files \(/support/article/KB-00562/organizing-your-plan-and-layout-files.html\)](/support/article/KB-00562/organizing-your-plan-and-layout-files.html)

[Using the Backup Entire Plan/Layout Tool \(/support/article/KB-00987/using-the-backup-entire-plan-layout-tool.html\)](/support/article/KB-00987/using-the-backup-entire-plan-layout-tool.html)