

Accessing Your Archive Files

Reference Number: **KB-00099**

Last Modified: **June 25, 2025**

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

QUESTION


Recently, I experienced a computer malfunction while working in the software and now when I try to open my plan file, an error message tells me that it cannot be opened by the program. What can I do to recover at least some of my work?



ANSWER

In the event that file corruption has occurred, and you're unable to successfully open one of your project files, you may be able to reference a backup copy located in the Archives.

Note: Archive files should not be viewed as a substitute for regularly saving your work, nor should they be considered an alternative to your own file backup routine. It's important to understand that archive files may not reflect the progress you have made in a given project, the state of the model, or any other criteria that you might consider to be important.

To access archive files

1. If you're using Project Management in X17, Home Designer 2026, or a newer version, select **Open Plan/Layout** , then click the **Browse** button under the Unmanaged Files section.

If you're using Traditional File Management, or using X16, Home Designer 2025, or a prior version, select **Open Plan**  or **Open Layout** .

2. Browse to your program's Data folder, which is located in the Documents directory by default, and open the **Archives** subfolder.

For example, the default file path for Chief Architect Premier X17 on a Microsoft Windows system is:

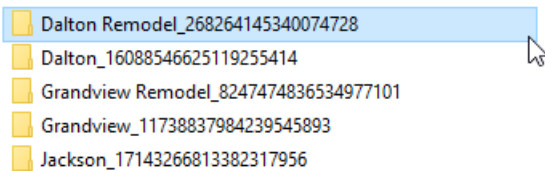
C:\Users\ [YOUR USERNAME] \Documents\Chief Architect Premier X17 Data\Archives

And on an Apple macOS machine:

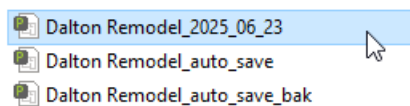
/Users/ [YOUR USERNAME] /Documents/Chief Architect Premier X17 Data/Archives

3. Locate the folder with the name of the file that you're hoping to recover and open it.

Note: Plan and layout files are placed in separate subfolders, even if the names of the files are the same.



4. Select and open the most recently saved file in this subfolder.



Note: Every time a drawing is created and saved, archive files that keep a historical archive of your plan are automatically created or updated. Files can be archived by hour, day or most recent save. They are renamed according to which archiving option is selected in the Preferences dialog. In the image above, the archive file is titled Dalton Remodel_2023_02_10, which is a daily archive.



As you work, Chief Architect products automatically create auto save files at regular intervals when changes are made to a file but are not saved. These auto save files are appended _auto_save.plan or _auto_save.layout.


Auto save files created as a result of an improper program shutdown are appended _auto_save_bak.plan or _auto_save_bak.layout. If your computer shuts down accidentally, you can recover some of your work by opening the _auto_save_bak file.

5. If you're using Project Management in X17, Home Designer 2026, or a newer version, an **Import To Project** dialog will display. Select either **Import to Existing Project** to import the archive into an existing project or **Open plan/layout but do not import to Project** to open it as a stand-alone file for further inspection.

If you're using Traditional File Management, or using X16, Home Designer 2025, or a prior version, the file will open immediately in the program.

6. Note any error or warning messages that may appear, and examine it for missing data or other problems. If the file appears to be affected by corruption, close the file and open the file that was saved prior to that one.


7. Repeat the steps above until you find a version of the file that does not appear to have any problems associated with it.
8. If you're using Project Management in X17, Home Designer 2026, or a newer version, select **File> Save** , then proceed to rename the file using the **Project Browser** , if you so wish.

If you're using Traditional File Management, or using X16, Home Designer 2025, or a prior version, select **File> Save As**  from the menu, and in the **Save Plan File** dialog that opens, choose an appropriate location to save the file to, specify a desired name, then click **Save**.






Do not save this file in the Archives, nor in the program's Data folder. Please see the [Related Articles](#) section below to learn more about the recommended practices for where to save your files when using Traditional File Management.

9. Going forward, this newly saved file is the one that you will want to work with.

If you have retrieved an archive file that contains views that have been sent to a layout, some views may need to be re-linked. Please see the [Related Articles](#) section below if you encounter an issue with plan and layout linking.

You can specify how many archive files are created on the **FILE MANAGEMENT** panel of the **Preferences**  dialog. However, it is important to note that these settings cannot guarantee full, exact restoration of your projects under all circumstances.

Related Articles

-  [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)
-  [Managing Your Archive Files \(/support/article/KB-00775/managing-your-archive-files.html\)](/support/article/KB-00775/managing-your-archive-files.html)
-  [Message: Could not successfully open all of this layout's associated files.\(/support/article/KB-00022/message-could-not-successfully-open-all-of-this-layout-s-associated-files.html\)](/support/article/KB-00022/message-could-not-successfully-open-all-of-this-layout-s-associated-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)
-  [Restoring Chief Architect Content Using Traditional File Management \(/support/article/KB-00091/restoring-chief-architect-content-using-traditional-file-management.html\)](/support/article/KB-00091/restoring-chief-architect-content-using-traditional-file-management.html)