

Troubleshooting Slowness in Home Designer Plans

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The information in this article applies to:



QUESTION

After working in my plan for a while, it seems that it starts to become slower, more sluggish, or experiences more lag. Why might this behavior be occurring, and is there anything I can do to try to address the issue?

ANSWER

In this article, we will discuss the most common reasons that you may be encountering slowness in working in your Home Designer plan file.

Before completing these steps, please check to make sure that any other software running on the computer or in the background is needed, and exit any other programs that you may not need to have open while working in Home Designer.

There may potentially be more than one cause to experiencing file slowness in your plan, so you should review all of the information listed below in order.

- [Work on Files Locally](#)
- [Verify System Requirements](#)
- [Program Updates](#)
- [Simplify Fill Styles and Patterns](#)
- [Slowness in 3D Views](#)
- [Disable Auto Rebuild Options](#)
- [Home Designer Pro Only](#)
- [Advanced Troubleshooting](#)

Work on Files Locally

By far, the most common reason for slowness is working in an unsupported fashion, such as over a network

server location, external hard drive, or USB flash drive.

In addition to experiencing slowness working in files, working in this type of unsupported fashion is hazardous because it can lead to file corruption and data loss.

For these reasons, it is critical always to work on files that are saved on your local hard drive. This means that you should copy the file from a network server, external hard drive, or USB flash drive location to your computer's hard drive before opening it in the software. Then, make your changes, save the file, exit the program, and then copy the file back to its network server, external hard drive, or USB flash drive location.

If you are working on your computer's hard drive, and are still experiencing slowness, then please continue with the information provided in this article.

Verify System Requirements


If you are working on files locally, the next step is to verify that your computer meets, or better yet, exceeds, the minimum system requirements for running your version of Home Designer.

The system requirements for the current version of the software can be located at: <https://www.homedesignersoftware.com/products/system-requirements.html> (<https://www.homedesignersoftware.com/products/system-requirements.html>)

System requirements for prior versions can be located at: <https://www.homedesignersoftware.com/support/article/KB-01095/> (<https://www.homedesignersoftware.com/support/article/KB-01095/>)

- If you primarily notice slowness with regards to 3D Camera views, check to see what video card is in your system. Please see the [Locating your Computer's Specifications](https://www.homedesignersoftware.com/support/article/KB-03129/locating-your-computer-specifications.html) (<https://www.homedesignersoftware.com/support/article/KB-03129/locating-your-computer-specifications.html>) Knowledge Base article to learn more.

If your video card only just meets the minimum system requirements, then you may want to look into replacing it with a video card that is mentioned in our [recommended system requirements](https://www.homedesignersoftware.com/products/system-requirements.html#recommended) (<https://www.homedesignersoftware.com/products/system-requirements.html#recommended>).

- Update your video card's driver by following the instructions in the [Troubleshooting 3D Camera View Display Problems in Home Designer](https://www.homedesignersoftware.com/support/article/KB-00897/troubleshooting-3d-camera-view-display-problems-in-home-designer.html) (<https://www.homedesignersoftware.com/support/article/KB-00897/troubleshooting-3d-camera-view-display-problems-in-home-designer.html>) Knowledge Base article, then verify that the appropriate card and driver are listed in Home Designer's **Preferences**  under the **VIDEO CARD STATUS** panel. If the incorrect card is listed in Preferences, it's possible that your system has switchable graphics. Please see the [Forcing Chief Architect Programs to Use a Specific Graphics Card in Windows 10](https://www.homedesignersoftware.com/support/article/KB-03140/forcing-chief-architect-programs-to-use-a-specific-graphics-card-in-windows-10.html) (<https://www.homedesignersoftware.com/support/article/KB-03140/forcing-chief-architect-programs-to-use-a-specific-graphics-card-in-windows-10.html>) Knowledge Base article to learn how to configure your switchable graphics.
- If you are using multiple monitors, make sure that your system's video card fully supports this functionality.

You may experience slowness, particularly with 3D camera views as well as library and dialog previews if the video card is taxed by three or more monitors as well as the rendering. You can test shutting the system down, disconnecting the extra monitors, restarting the system, and then attempt to run Home Designer on a single

screen to see if speed improves.

- If you are looking into purchasing a new system and want to make sure that it offers good performance, please view both our [recommended system requirements](https://www.homedesignersoftware.com/products/system-requirements.html#recommended) (<https://www.homedesignersoftware.com/products/system-requirements.html#recommended>) and our [Chief Blog article](https://www.chiefarchitect.com/blog/computer-for-design-and-gaming/) (<https://www.chiefarchitect.com/blog/computer-for-design-and-gaming/>).

Program Updates

After verifying your computer does meet the System Requirements for running your version of Home Designer, you will then want to verify that the latest program update is installed.

- To check for Home Designer program updates, select **Help> Download Program Updates** from within the software. If a newer update is available, then you should download and install it, then restart the computer.
- Program updates can also be downloaded from the website directly at: <https://www.homedesignersoftware.com/support/updates.html> (<https://www.homedesignersoftware.com/support/updates.html>)

Do not attempt to install a program update for a different program or version than the one installed on your system.

Simplify Fill Styles and Patterns

Depending on your version, you may have the ability to apply Fill Styles and Patterns to objects like rooms, closed CAD polylines, wall types, hatching, terrain objects, etc.

- Try and avoid using complex fill styles and patterns extensively in your plan, as these can greatly slow down working in floor plan view for tasks such as zooming, moving, and placing objects.
- Material patterns, such as complex stone or tile patterns that appear in the Vector View rendering technique (Cross Section/Elevation views), can slow down the generation and movement in these views.
- If you must add these types of detailed CAD elements for hatching and fills to your design, make sure to do so as one of the final steps when your plan is near completion, and expect to encounter slowness with the file after doing so.

Slowness in 3D Views

If your design seems particularly slow with regards to 3D camera views, bear in mind that Home Designer relies on the video card for 3D rendering and response times.

- Avoid working with multiple 3D camera views open. Every time you make a change to the plan, the program will redraw the entire model. Depending on the complexity of the design, this may take a long time.

You can see how many view windows are open by selecting the Window menu. Open view windows are listed

at the bottom of the menu.

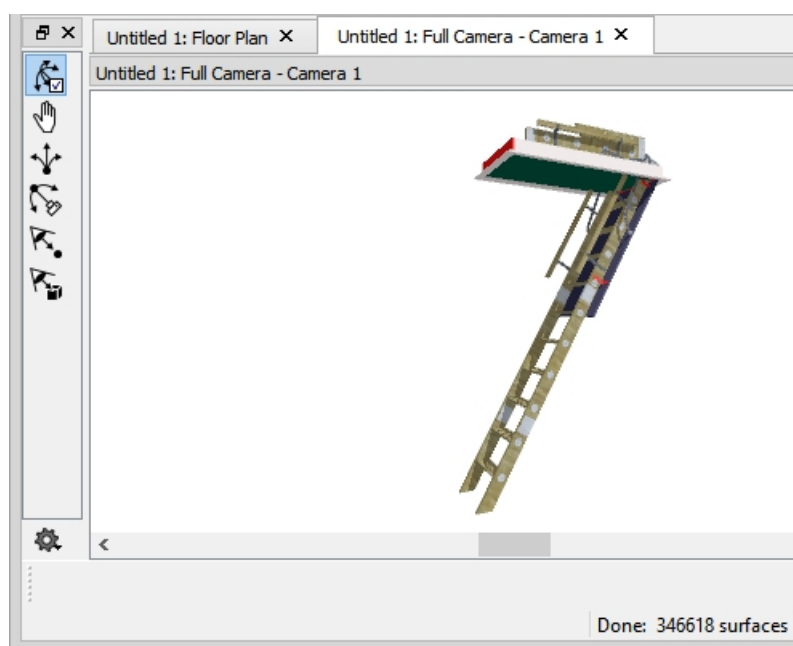
If you are using the Generated Sky setting, keep in mind it takes into account the orientation of the sun, so if you've set the sun to follow your camera, then the generated sky will regenerate each camera movement to account for the new sun direction, which can cause slowness in 3D camera views.

- If you have an integrated graphics chipset, which shares system memory instead of dedicated video memory of its own, then expect camera views to generate and respond more slowly than on a system with a video card with dedicated video memory.
- **Manage Displayed Layers** - If you need to work in 3D views, turn off the display of any layers that are not needed for the task to improve redraw time.

To learn more about working with layers, please see the [Toggling the Display of Objects](https://www.homedesignersoftware.com/support/article/KB-00264/) (<https://www.homedesignersoftware.com/support/article/KB-00264/>) Knowledge Base article.

- **Manage 3D Surface Count** - Avoid importing 3D objects from outside sources that have a large number of complex surfaces, as these can significantly slow down camera views.

To check the number of surfaces for an imported symbol, start a new, blank plan using the default style template. Import the symbol into that plan by itself, then create a camera view of the symbol. The number of surfaces will be displayed on the Status Bar at the bottom of the Home Designer window.



Disable Auto Rebuild Options

There are several settings within the program that affect rebuilding, which can slow down a complex plan if they are constantly having to be regenerated after every change. For speed purposes, you may want to turn off these auto rebuild settings, and only turn them back on when the plan is close to completion.

- **Automatically Rebuild Foundation** - This setting can be accessed by selecting **Edit> Default Settings> Foundation**.

Uncheck **Automatically Rebuild Foundation** to stop the foundation from rebuilding every time you make a

change on the first floor. Please note that you will then have to manually update the Floor 0 level, or remember to turn the feature back on later in the design process.

- ***Automatically Build Framing** - There are several settings relating to the automatic generation of framing, which can be accessed by selecting **Edit> Default Settings> Framing**.

Go through every individual floor panel, starting on the Foundation, up to 1st, 2nd, etc and uncheck the checkboxes near the top of the dialog for **Automatically Build Floor and Ceiling Framing**.

On the **WALL** panel, uncheck **Automatically Build Wall Framing**.

On the **ROOF** panel, uncheck **Automatically Build Roof Framing**.

*Home Designer Pro Only



- **Auto Rebuild Roofs** - This setting can be accessed by selecting **Edit> Default Settings> Roof**.

On the **ROOF** panel, uncheck **Auto Rebuild Roofs**. Any future changes made to the plan while this setting is disabled will not affect the roof, so you will need to either wait until the plan is nearer to completion to turn the setting back or make manual adjustments to the roof if you're using Home Designer Pro.

- Again, if these changes offer speed improvement in working with your complex plan, you will need to remember to manually rebuild the various options, or to wait until the plan is near completion to turn the automatic settings back on.

Home Designer Pro Only Settings

Home Designer Pro has several additional capabilities that can potentially cause slowness:


- By default, picture and PDF files imported into your Home Designer Pro plan are referenced from outside of the file. You can, however, choose the Save in Plan option in the Specification dialogs for both of these referenced file types to embed them in the file. If you choose this option, it can significantly slow down working in plan and layout files.
- Home Designer Pro can send views to a separate file called a layout. When a cross section/elevation, camera view, or overview is sent to a layout, you have the option to select Live View to make the view dynamically linked to the plan file. You can also select for this view to Update On Demand or Update Always. Selecting Update Always can potentially contribute to slowness in your plan. To change a view so that it only updates on demand, select the view in your layout, then click the **Open Object**  edit button to open the **Layout Box Specification** dialog. On the **CAMERA VIEW** panel, select **Update On Demand**, then click **OK**.
- If you have been using a file through several versions of Home Designer, you may have unnecessary, leftover materials that can be removed to reduce the overall size of your plan file. To purge unused materials from your plan, select **3D> Plan Materials**  from the menu to display the **Plan Materials** dialog. The list that displays on the left includes all materials present in the plan. Select the **Purge** button to remove all unused materials from the plan.

ADVANCED TROUBLESHOOTING

If you have completed all of the troubleshooting steps listed in this article and still have not been able to determine the cause of the slowness in your plan, then please submit all of the following information to Chief Architect's Technical Support team for advanced troubleshooting.

1. When you notice the slowness, take a moment to write down what you were doing. Include what views you had open, what tools you were using, and what types of objects were being added, edited, or removed.

For example, joining two particular roof planes, modifying CAD lines, editing doors/windows while a 3D camera view is open, rebuilding framing, etc.

2. Use the **Backup Entire Plan/Project**  tool to create a folder with a copy of the file in which the error occurs, along with all referenced files.

See Knowledge Base article: [Using the Backup Entire Plan/Project Tool to Send Files to Another User \(https://www.homedesignersoftware.com/support/article/KB-00987/using-the-backup-entire-plan-project-tool-to-send-files-to-another-user.html\)](https://www.homedesignersoftware.com/support/article/KB-00987/using-the-backup-entire-plan-project-tool-to-send-files-to-another-user.html).

3. If you are receiving an error or warning dialog box, make sure to first search this Knowledge Base for the exact wording of the error, or click on the Check KB button in the message if one is present, as there may be specific information relevant to that error in another article. If you are unable to locate any additional information on the error, make sure to attach a screenshot of the message.

See Knowledge Base article: [Creating a Screenshot \(https://www.homedesignersoftware.com/support/article/KB-00326/\)](https://www.homedesignersoftware.com/support/article/KB-00326/).

4. Locate and save the program's MESSAGE LOG file.

See Knowledge Base article: [Locating the Message Log \(https://www.homedesignersoftware.com/support/article/KB-02908/\)](https://www.homedesignersoftware.com/support/article/KB-02908/).

5. Export or save your SYSTEM INFORMATION.

See Knowledge Base article: [Retrieving System Information to Send to Technical Support \(https://www.homedesignersoftware.com/support/article/KB-01867/retrieving-system-information-to-send-to-technical-support.html\)](https://www.homedesignersoftware.com/support/article/KB-01867/retrieving-system-information-to-send-to-technical-support.html).

6. Sign in to the [Technical Support Center \(https://support.chiefarchitect.com/\)](https://support.chiefarchitect.com/) and create a new support case to send to Technical Support.

See Knowledge Base article: [Using the Technical Support Center \(https://www.homedesignersoftware.com/support/article/KB-00717/using-the-technical-support-center.html\)](https://www.homedesignersoftware.com/support/article/KB-00717/using-the-technical-support-center.html).

7. Give the case a short but descriptive title.

In the text of the ticket, type a detailed description of the problem, including the exact steps that caused the slowness to occur if at all possible. The more detailed you are, the more likely we will be to reproduce the issue and identify the problem.

Click the **Browse** button and attach the **PROJECT BACKUP**, **SCREENSHOT**, **MESSAGE LOG**, and **SYSTEM INFORMATION** files to your case, then **Submit** it.

Note: Some of the requested information may identify you, as well as specific information about your computer, but it will also help us determine the source of the problem. Please be assured that any files submitted to Chief Architect Technical Support will be used for troubleshooting purposes only.

Related Articles

- [📄 Forcing Chief Architect Programs to Use a Specific Graphics Card in Windows 10\(/support/article/KB-03140/forcing-chief-architect-programs-to-use-a-specific-graphics-card-in-windows-10.html\)](/support/article/KB-03140/forcing-chief-architect-programs-to-use-a-specific-graphics-card-in-windows-10.html)
- [📄 Home Designer Minimum System Requirements \(/support/article/KB-01095/home-designer-minimum-system-requirements.html\)](/support/article/KB-01095/home-designer-minimum-system-requirements.html)
- [📄 Locating the Message Log \(/support/article/KB-02908/locating-the-message-log.html\)](/support/article/KB-02908/locating-the-message-log.html)
- [📄 Locating Your Computer's Specifications \(/support/article/KB-03129/locating-your-computer-specifications.html\)](/support/article/KB-03129/locating-your-computer-specifications.html)
- [📄 Retrieving System Information to Send to Technical Support \(/support/article/KB-01867/retrieving-system-information-to-send-to-technical-support.html\)](/support/article/KB-01867/retrieving-system-information-to-send-to-technical-support.html)
- [📄 Toggling the Display of Objects \(/support/article/KB-00264/toggling-the-display-of-objects.html\)](/support/article/KB-00264/toggling-the-display-of-objects.html)
- [📄 Troubleshooting 3D Camera View Display Problems in Home Designer \(/support/article/KB-00897/troubleshooting-3d-camera-view-display-problems-in-home-designer.html\)](/support/article/KB-00897/troubleshooting-3d-camera-view-display-problems-in-home-designer.html)
- [📄 Troubleshooting Chief Architect Software Closing Unexpectedly on Windows \(/support/article/KB-03049/troubleshooting-chief-architect-software-closing-unexpectedly-on-windows.html\)](/support/article/KB-03049/troubleshooting-chief-architect-software-closing-unexpectedly-on-windows.html)
- [📄 Using the Technical Support Center \(/support/article/KB-00717/using-the-technical-support-center.html\)](/support/article/KB-00717/using-the-technical-support-center.html)