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Architectural Home Design
Software

Locating Lost or Missing Files on Your Computer

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

QUESTION

My Chief Architect or Home Designer file was here yesterday, but today it seems to be missing. Where is the first place I should look for my missing file?

ANSWER

When using Traditional File Management, Chief Architect programs save files to the location on your computer that you have chosen to save them.

In this article, we will discuss how to check your Recycle Bin/Trash and search your operating system for lost or missing Chief Architect files. If you're unable to locate the original file you were working on, you may be able to locate a backup of the file within the archives.

- Checking your deleted items in the Recycle Bin/Trash
- Searching for files on Windows
- Searching for files on macOS
- Accessing the archives
- Seeking professional assistance

Note: If you're using Project Management in X17, Home Designer 2026, or a newer version, Chief Architect and Home Designer files are accessed and managed using the Project Browser within the program. To learn more, please see the Related Articles section below or refer to your program's documentation.

To check your deleted items in the Recycle Bin/Trash

1. Oftentimes, "lost" files are files that have simply been deleted - either accidentally or intentionally. Check your Windows **Recycle Bin** or **Trash**.

   > You should check your Recycle Bin/Trash immediately, as continued write activity increases the possibility of an unrecoverable loss.

2. For more information on the Recycle Bin/Trash, please see the appropriate link for your operating system below.

   - Windows (https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/windows/find-the-recycle-bin-885cf298-0f98-a548-9427-a1248fce4315)
   - macOS (https://support.apple.com/en-gb/guide/mac-help/mchlp1093/15.0/mac/15.0)

If the missing or lost files cannot be located in your operating system's Recycle Bin or Trash, it is possible they haven't been deleted, but may be at a different location than you initially checked. Use the search function in your operating system to locate them.

To search for files on Windows

1. Open File Explorer by clicking the **File Explorer** icon on your taskbar.

2. In the upper right of the Explorer Window, there is a Search box. The search will look in all the folders and sub folders in the current location.
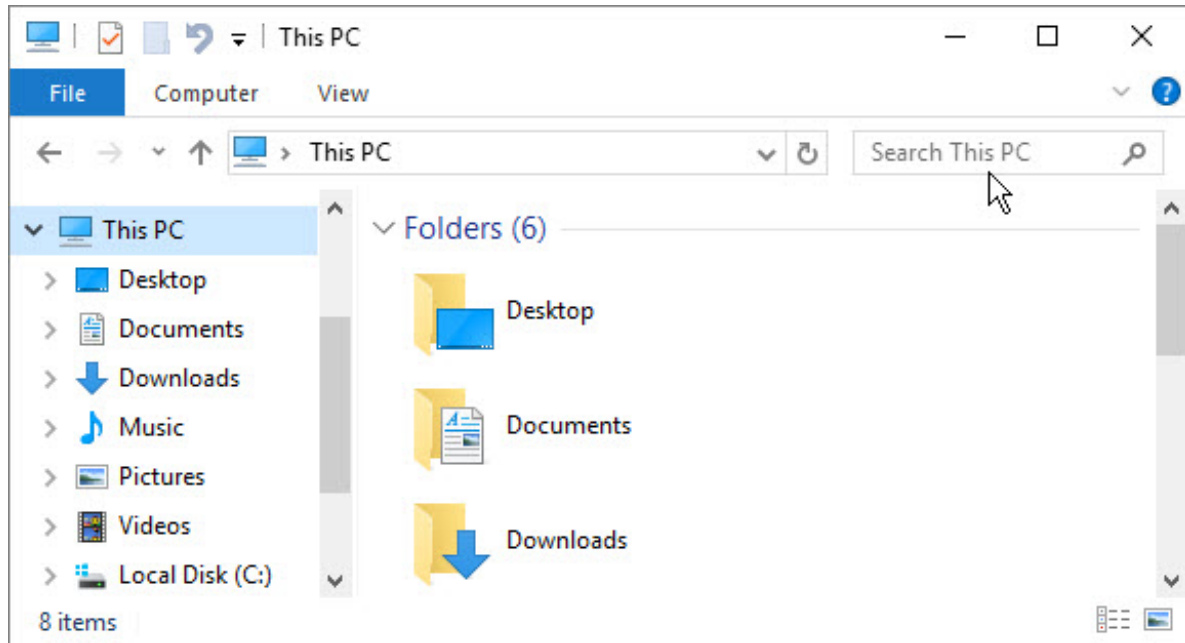

- Try searching for the exact name of your lost file.

- To pull up only files with the .plan extension, type: `*.plan` .

- To pull up only files with the .layout extension, type: `*.layout` .

- To pull up only files with the .caproject extension in X17, Home Designer 2026, and newer versions. type: `*.caproj` .

- Sort by the Date Modified in order to quickly locate the most recent files.

3. To learn more about searching your Windows computer for files, please see the following link: Windows Search and privacy (https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/windows/windows-search-and-privacy-99fb8251-7260-1cd6-1bbb-15c2370eb168).

To search for files on macOS

1. Click on the **Spotlight** tool (Magnifying glass) located in the top right corner of the menu bar.

2. Type: `.plan`, `.layout`, or `.caproj` to search for plan, layout, or project files.
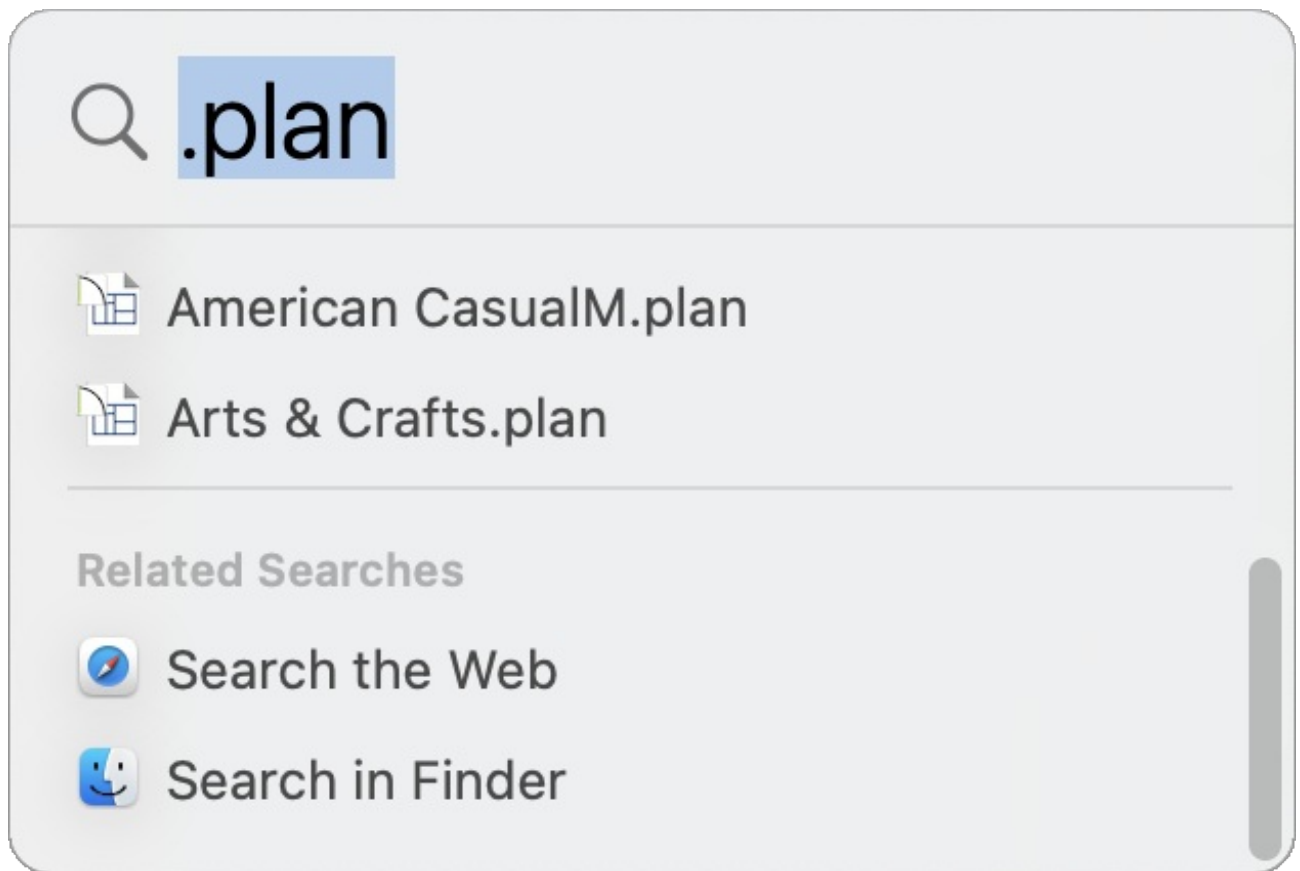
3. Scroll down and click on the **Search in Finder** option to show every file of that type and its location on your system.

4. To learn more about searching for files on a Mac, please see the following link:
Narrow your search results on Mac (https://support.apple.com/en-gb/guide/mac-help/mh15155/15.0/mac/15.0).

To access the archives

If you encountered a power failure or forced system restart before you were able to save your most recent changes in the file, you may be able to locate a recent backup which has much of the data still saved in it.

To learn more, please see the "Accessing Your Archive Files" resource in the <u>Related Articles</u> section below.

> Archive files are meant to be for emergency use only and should not be used as your primary backup method.
>
> If you do not already have a backup system in place, please see backup resources in the <u>Related Articles</u> section below.

To seek professional assistance

If you are not able to access your hard drive, or if you are unable to find your missing data, contact a computer professional in your area.

Alternatively, use another computer to search the Internet for a data recovery expert, as you may be experiencing a hard drive failure resulting in data loss that could become more serious as time goes on.

For future reference on how Chief Architect recommends organizing your files when using Traditional File Management, please see the <u>Related Articles</u> section below.

<u>Return To Top</u>

Related Articles

<u>Accessing Your Archive Files (/support/article/KB-00099/accessing-your-archive-files.html)</u>
<u>Backing Up and Restoring Chief Architect Content Using Project Management (/support/article/KB-03211/backing-up-and-restoring-chief-architect-content-using-project-management.html)</u>
<u>Backing Up Chief Architect Content Using Traditional File Management (/support/article/KB-00001/backing-up-chief-architect-content-using-traditional-file-management.html)</u>
<u>Enabling or Disabling Project Management (/support/article/KB-03210/enabling-or-</u>

disabling-project-management.html)

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

🖻Working With the Project Browser Using Project Management (/support/article/KB-03217/working-with-the-project-browser-using-project-management.html)

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