

Sharing a Project With a Home Designer User

Reference Number: **KB-00516**

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QUESTION

I would like to be able to send my projects (consisting of plans and or layout files) back and forth between myself and someone else who is using a different Chief Architect product, such as Home Designer. How can I send them a file that they can open and modify in their product?

ANSWER

If a Chief Architect user wants to be able to send a Home Designer user a file, first check to make sure that the versions that both users have are compatible. If the versions are compatible, then the Chief Architect user needs to enable a setting that allows editing in Home Designer programs before sending the file.

If you are uncertain as to whether or not your version of Chief Architect is the same version as the individual using the Home Designer program, you can use the information listed below.


- Chief Architect X17 <=> Home Designer 2026
- Chief Architect X16 <=> Home Designer 2025
- Chief Architect X15 <=> Home Designer 2024
- Chief Architect X14 <=> Home Designer 2023
- Chief Architect X13 <=> Home Designer 2022
- Chief Architect X12 <=> Home Designer 2021

Keep in mind that, as a Chief Architect user, you can open a file created in an earlier version of a Home Designer program and you will be able to open and modify the file. However, if you send it back to someone using a prior Home Designer version, they will not be able to reopen the file in their version.

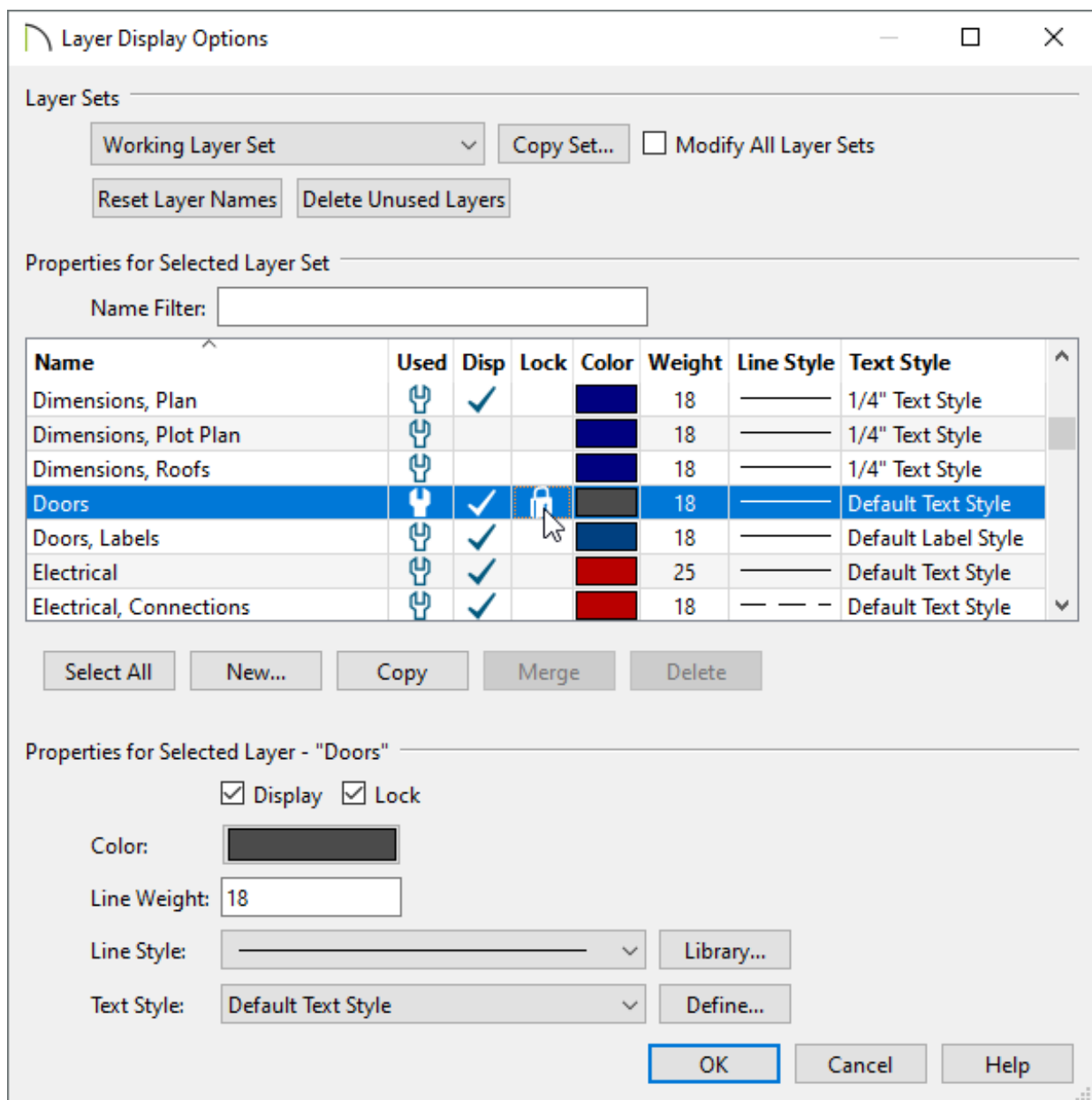
For example, if the Home Designer person is using a Home Designer 2025 program, and you are using Chief Architect X17, then they will be able to send you their file, which you can open, modify and save, but they will not be able to reopen the file unless they upgrade to Home Designer 2026.

If you are using the current version of Chief Architect, but your client is using an older discontinued Home Designer program, they will need to upgrade to the current version of Home Designer (<https://www.homedesignersoftware.com/discounts/>), or instead request the Chief Architect Viewer (<https://www.chiefarchitect.com/resources/viewerrequest.php>) program.

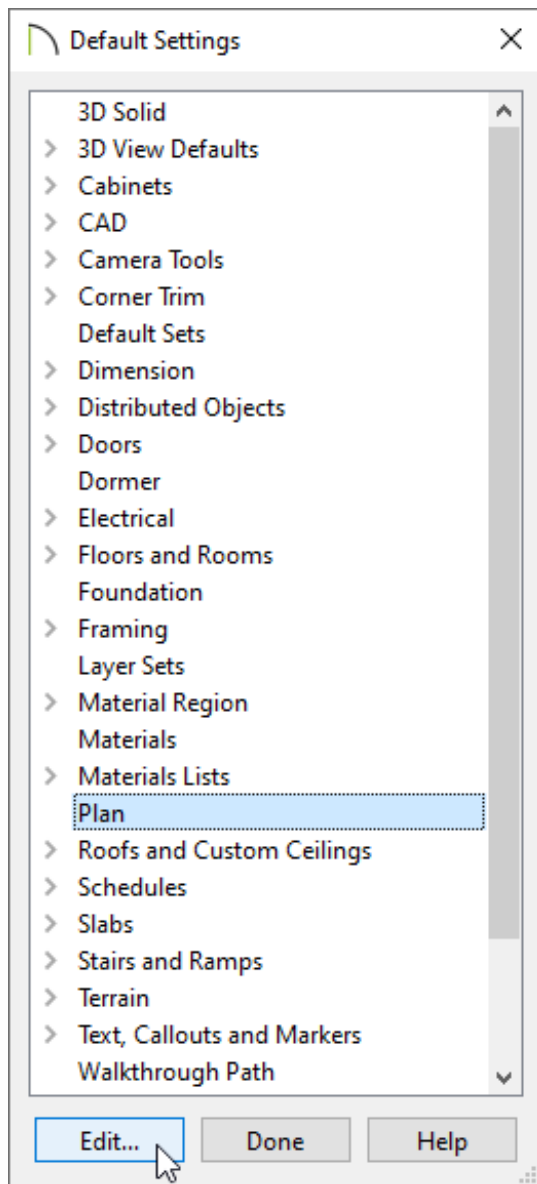
To share a project with a Home Designer user

1. Access the file(s) that you want to share.
2. Select **Tools> Layer Settings> Display Options**  from the menu and lock any layers you don't want the user to modify, then click **OK**.

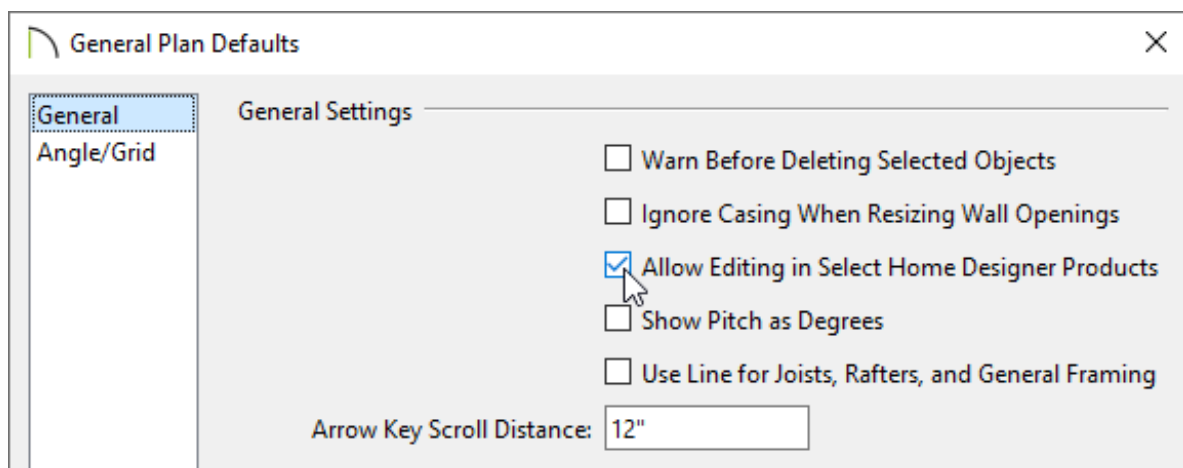
Note: If your client or colleague is using Home Designer Pro, they can still unlock/lock layers.




3. Select **Edit> Default Settings** , and in the **Default Settings** dialog, click on either **Plan** or **Layout**, then click **Edit**.





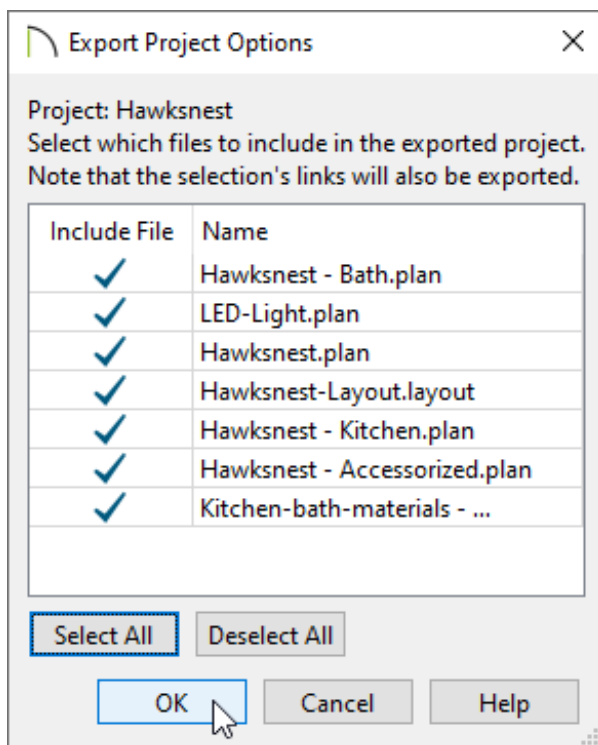
4. In the **General Plan/Layout Defaults** dialog that displays, check the **Allow Editing in Select Home Designer Products** box.



5. Click **OK** and **Done** to close the dialogs, then click **Save** .


Please note that the editing abilities available to the Home Designer user will be within the limitations of their program. For example, Home Designer products do not have the capability to modify schedules.

6. The project can now be exported or backed up, however the process will vary depending on the version used, as well as the features that are enabled:
 - In X17 and newer versions, with Project Management *enabled*, navigate to **File> Export> Export Project**  while a plan or layout is open, or right-click on a single project in the **Project Browser**  and select **Export** from the contextual menu. In the dialog that appears next, check/uncheck the files that you would like to include/exclude using the **Include File** column, then click **OK**.



- In X17 and newer versions, with Project Management *disabled* (Traditional File Management), navigate to **File> Export> Export Plan/Layout as Project** .

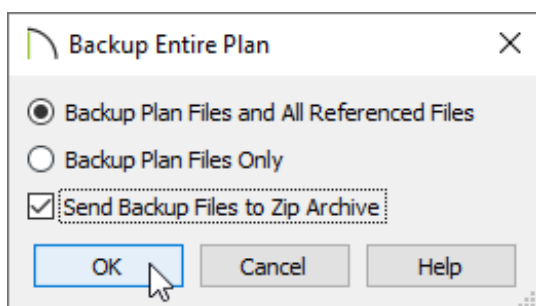
Note: If you use the Export Layout as Project tool while in a layout file, the layout and all plans associated with the layout will be backed up. However, if you use the Export Plan as Project tool while in a plan file, only the plan will be backed up.

- In X16 and prior versions, navigate to **File> Backup Entire Plan/Layout**  , select the **Backup Plan Files and All Referenced Files** option, ensure that the **Send Backup Files to Zip Archive** box is checked, then click **OK**.

Note: If you use the Backup Entire Layout tool while in a layout file, the layout and all plans associated with the layout will be backed up. However, if you use the Backup Entire Plan tool while in a plan file, only the plan will be backed up.

Additionally, if the "Send Backup Files to Zip Archive" box was not checked, you will need to create a new, empty file folder on the Desktop for the plan and referenced files to be backed up to:

- On a Windows operating system, right-click in an empty area and choose "New> Folder".
- On a macOS system, right-click in an empty area and choose "New Folder".



7. Specify a **File name**, if given the option, a location to save the project or compressed (zipped) folder to, then click **Save**.

In X17 and newer versions, an **Information** dialog will also appear stating "Project export is complete. [#] plan file and [#] layout file were saved." Click **OK**.

You can now send this project or compressed (zipped) folder to a Home Designer user.

- 📄 [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)
- 📄 [Exporting Projects and Disconnected Files \(/support/article/KB-03212/exporting-projects-and-disconnected-files.html\)](/support/article/KB-03212/exporting-projects-and-disconnected-files.html)
- 📄 [Opening Legacy Files \(/support/article/KB-00279/opening-legacy-files.html\)](/support/article/KB-00279/opening-legacy-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)



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