



"Chief Architect makes 3D CAD easy – Most architectural CAD software is geared toward producing 2D construction documents first, with 3D or rendering capability thrown in as icing on the cake. Chief Architect is all about quick 3D visualization and presentation, with 2D CAD if you need it. Chief Architect makes visualization quick and easy enough that even a novice operator can work with Chief..."

Builder

Chief Architect X2

Home Designer Pro 9

Comparison Features	Full	Home Designer Pro 9
3D and Render Views		
Advanced, high-quality rendering using raytracing technology. Includes reflections and radiosity to produce photo-realistic images	✓	No
Advanced Render Techniques - Watercolor, Technical Illustration, Squiggle Line Drawing, Glass House, and more	✓	Limited
Advanced Render Technique defaults	✓	No
Doll House™ View, a 3D view without the roof, provides an effective tool for space planning to determine room size, traffic flow and furniture arrangement	✓	✓
Produce high quality 3D Render Views of interior and exterior in full detail	✓	✓
Control the display of objects in all views using Layer Display Options	✓	✓
Place and edit objects directly in 3D Views	✓	✓
Adjustable Vector View™ quality allows for quick navigation in 3D views	✓	No
Toggle Patterns on or off in Vector View™	✓	✓
Cameras can be named, edited, and saved	✓	✓
Cross Section Slider™ allows you to dynamically slice Render Views	✓	✓
Camera Pan, Orbit, Tilt, and Move Camera with Mouse tools in Vector Views to navigate view in real-time	✓	✓
Create AVI movies of virtual 3D walk-throughs	✓	✓
Adjust render settings for optimal processing speed and quality results	✓	✓
Record Walkthrough Movies along a designated path	✓	✓
Shadows are calculated from the sun and interior/exterior lighting for dramatic Render Views	✓	✓
Panoramic or spherical backdrops in Render Views	✓	✓
Virtual Graph Paper™ with adjustable grid displays	✓	✓
Material Eyedropper™ and Color Chooser™ allow drag-and-drop application of materials in 3D	✓	✓
Default Painter tool - restore architectural items to their default material	✓	✓
Cabinets / Fixtures / Furniture		
Fully customizable cabinets: backsplash, appliances, countertop, drawers, rail, doors, lazy susan, cutting boards, shelves, toe-kick, custom moldings, and more	✓	✓
Place, edit, and customize cabinets in plan view and 3D views	✓	✓
Support added for manufacturer catalogs for doors, windows, and cabinets with SSA	✓	Limited
Manufacturer catalogs, while specific products, also have the advantage of being parametric so items can be resized to conform to different objects	✓	No
Manufacturer's cabinet catalogs include door and drawer styles, cabinet boxes, colors, and wood species	✓	No
Cabinet Display options to conform to NKBA standards - countertops, line styles, and more	✓	No
Display Countertop lines in Plan View and control the display of the layer	✓	✓
Control the display of edge molding applied to custom countertops using layers	✓	No
Detail cabinets and doors with hinges, handles, and pulls	✓	✓
Apply moldings to cabinets	✓	✓
Dentil/Rope Moldings	✓	No
Attach millwork to cabinets	✓	No
Cabinet Fillers - create cabinet fillers automatically between cabinets, or add them manually	✓	Automatic Only
Cabinet End Panels - add custom end panels to cabinets	✓	No
Control material assigned to end panels	✓	No
Place Cabinet Doors, Drawers, and End Panels in plan as stand-alone objects	✓	✓
Create and accessorize cabinet groupings and add to the library as Architectural Blocks - entertainment centers, kitchen islands, cabinet banks, baths, and more	✓	No
Use Cabinet Modules Library to create 1,000's of custom combinations	✓	✓
Schedules for Cabinets, Fixtures, and Furniture	✓	No
Improved Materials List better represents details and components of cabinets	✓	✓
Curved and Angled Cabinet fronts	✓	✓
Specify shelf spacing & numbers for each opening in cabinet	✓	✓
Attach Legs and Pilasters to cabinets	✓	No
Rounded cabinet corners	✓	✓
Defaults for Soffits - control the behavior of soffits by specifying default values	✓	✓
Specify Electrical, Fixture, and Furniture items to attached to ceilings and roofs - objects can also be specified to auto-rotate and match the pitch	✓	No
CAD Tools / Blocks / Details		
Auto-Detailing fills in cross-section structural details	✓	No
CAD Defaults dialog apply and update your preferred settings per plan	✓	✓
Create and manage CAD Details and Blocks	✓	No
Complete Library of CAD Details with SSA	✓	No
CAD Detail From View - Automatically generate a CAD detail from any view	✓	No
CAD-to-Walls™ - Convert CAD lines to fully configured 3D walls	✓	✓
Automatic Wall Details - Generate wall details with framing layout, automatically!	✓	No
Automatic Truss Details - Automatically generated trusses and detail views	✓	No
Convert CAD lines to railings, doors, and windows	✓	No
Convert CAD polylines to countertops, roof holes, room polylines	✓	Limited
Convert CAD lines to polyline solids, molding polylines	✓	No
Convert CAD lines to roads, road markings, terrain features, slabs, and more	✓	No



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Builder

Comparison Features	Chief Architect X2 Full	Home Designer Pro 9
Comprehensive CAD objects and editing tools: points, lines, polylines, splines, arcs, circles, ovals, boxes, arrows, and more	✓	✓
Create 3D shapes using Polyline Solid tools	✓	No
New Face tool allows you to create solid faces, extrude and revolve them to create custom objects	✓	No
Advanced polyline tools: Polyline Subtract, Polyline Union, and Polyline Intersection	✓	No
Polygon CAD tool creates any regularly-shaped polylines of pre-specified dimension	✓	No
Revision Cloud Tool - automatically encircle objects with revision clouds, or draw your own	✓	No
Custom Line Style Editor allows you to create your own line types	✓	No
Convert Spline to Polyline, Convert Polyline to Spline	✓	No
Convert Arcs and Circles to Polylines	✓	No
Arc Creation Modes make drawing arcs more accurate	✓	Limited
Custom Design Tools		
Distribute Objects - distribute CAD, images, plants, and more along a line or within a polyline	✓	No
Loan Calculator tool to figure loan based values	✓	✓
House Wizard™ provides a quick way to lay out rooms that adjoin the project to illustrate how the completed project would look	✓	✓
3D Primitive Tools allow modeling of custom objects	✓	No
Create Symbol Wizard™ -- create custom symbols or import from manufacturers	✓	No
Create custom molding profiles	✓	No
Create custom ceilings -- tray, coffered, barrel, cathedral, and more	✓	✓
Apply materials to objects in 3D views with the Material Painter™	✓	✓
Color Palette™ toolbars with customizable material swatches	✓	No
Material Painter™ with scoping allows you to paint components, objects, wall or floors with a single click	✓	✓
Kitchen and Bath Design tool configuration	✓	No
Complete fireplace tools: masonry, freestanding, corner, and more	✓	✓
Dimensions and Text		
One-Click Auto Dimensions™	✓	✓
Improved Dimension tools and features - accuracy to 1/128", Feedback and Previews when creating dimension lines, new formatting options, and more	✓	No
Baseline Dimensions	✓	No
Dimension to casing or rough opening	✓	✓
Precisely relocate objects using dimensions	✓	✓
Metric and Imperial Dimensions	✓	✓
Dimension Secondary Number Format - define the display of secondary dimensions	✓	No
Accurate Move tool allows minute adjustments of objects	✓	✓
Temporary dynamic wall dimensions - wall length displays as you draw it	✓	✓
Dimension to Plants and Images	✓	✓
Fully editable Text Tools: control font, size, weight, color, position, justification, and more	✓	✓
Advanced Rich Text Tools - format text with varying colors, font, and more; Convert plain text to rich text	✓	✓
Architectural fonts: City Blueprint, Country Blueprint, Blueprint	✓	No
Spell Checker uses built-in or custom dictionary	✓	No
Enhanced text font control, font defaults, and text macros for page number, date, and more	✓	✓
Customizable text arrows	✓	✓
Doors / Windows		
Customize Door styles: interior, exterior, sliding, pocket, bi-fold, garage, and more	✓	✓
Customize Window styles: interior, exterior, single/double hung, sliding, casement, corner, recessed, bay, box, and more	✓	✓
Library Doors have interior and exterior material settings	✓	✓
Skylights with customizable properties	✓	✓
Blockable Doors and Windows for reuse in Library	✓	No
Enhanced control over Muled Units - control their label and schedule appearance	✓	No
Complete Door and Window Schedules	✓	No
Use Door, Doorway, and Window Library objects to create 1,000's of custom combinations	✓	✓
Door Hardware Library - Hinges, Handles and Locks	✓	✓
Double-swing door option	✓	✓
Double Walls/Window/Door Control for marriage walls and multi-family dwellings	✓	No
Custom Muntins - design your own muntins and attach to window	✓	No
Attach Window Treatments to windows - adjust curtains height off floor, height above casing	✓	✓
Blinds fit inside casing when attached to windows	✓	✓
Place capitals above window or door casing, set height and width	✓	No
Exterior Sill - specify sills for windows, set height and width	✓	No
Editing		
3D Editing of Walls, Roofs, and Stairs	✓	✓
Select All command	✓	No
Advanced Editing Tools with preferences give you the most efficient working methods	✓	Limited
Select Same tool allows similar objects to be selected at the same time	✓	No
Use the Make Same tool to quickly match properties between items of the same type	✓	No



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Home Designer Pro 9

Comparison Features	Full	Home Designer Pro 9
Replicate doors, windows, walls	✓	✓
Visual feedback for the size and orientation of objects being placed from the library and edited in plan and 3D views	✓	✓
Visual CAD Snaps™ - while editing automatically, snap items to others, or to the grid	✓	Limited
Bumping/Pushing toggle allows movement of objects by bumping into, pushing, or passing through others	✓	✓
Nudge Object tool - move selected items in small increments	✓	No
Draw Order Control - use the Move to Front tool to control the display of items in plan view	✓	✓
Previous Command options allows you to re-instate tools previously used with a keystroke	✓	No
Stand alone Color Chooser™ allows you pull custom colors from other applications	✓	No
Screen Capture Tool allows copying of images from any application	✓	No
Copy/Paste using Windows Clipboard	✓	✓
Copy Region as Picture	✓	✓
Paste Hold Position allows you to copy selection between floors while maintaining its orientation	✓	✓
More accurate Fillet and Chamfer tools	✓	✓
Toolbar Toggle buttons for marquee selection mode	✓	✓
Ability to snap to the lower part of a Pony Wall	✓	✓
Elevation Views		
Auto-generate Exterior and Room Elevations	✓	No
Auto-detail Cross Section views	✓	No
Use any of the rendering Techniques with elevations or cross-sections - Duotone, Technical Illustration, Enhanced Lighting, Painting, Watercolor, Line drawing	✓	No
Click-and-drag Cross Section/Elevation and Wall Elevation Views	✓	✓
Send Elevation Views to Layout pages	✓	✓
Send Elevation Views to CAD Details	✓	No
Edit objects in Cross Section or Wall Elevation Views	✓	✓
Floor / Space Planning		
Drag-and-drop rooms and arrange them with the House Wizard™	✓	✓
Space Planner toolbar configuration for easy room layout	✓	✓
Place Symbols in the plan for room layout and traffic flow	✓	✓
Create printed 3D models with Model Maker™	✓	✓
Exchange with Floor Above/Below tools	✓	No
Define floor coverings, finishes, and sub-layers	✓	✓
Name individual rooms from a defined list of types or create new names	✓	✓
Specify room attributes by room type	✓	✓
Custom Room Label controls - assign room types as well as custom room labels	✓	✓
Complete room dimensions with interior area measurements	✓	✓
Room Dimension Format Defaults - define the display of room dimensions	✓	No
Floor coverings, finishes and sub-layers	✓	✓
Attics with several customizable options	✓	✓
3D Molding Polylines	✓	No
Polygon Room tool creates room automatically with pre-specified dimensions	✓	No
Framing		
Complete Automatic Framing - settings for floors, walls, ceilings and roofs	✓	✓
Manual Framing Tools	✓	✓
Automatic Framing - turn on automatic framing for walls, floors, ceilings, and roofs to update your framing plan as your design changes	✓	✓
Exposed rafter tails and custom rafter tail cuts - choose from a molding profile in the library or draw your own profile; rafter tails display in 3D views.	✓	No
Advanced wall framing supports Balloon Framing	✓	No
Extend platforms through walls or walls through platforms (balloon framing)	✓	✓
Steel Framing for walls, headers, joists, and rafters - automatically creates C-Channel and U-Channel shaped framing members for typical steel framing	✓	No
Post and Beam framing tools	✓	✓
Automatically produce wall framing details	✓	No
Automatically produce platform holes, foundation holes	✓	No
Wall framing for short walls and knee walls	✓	✓
Automatic deck framing	✓	✓
Edit and customize floor, ceiling, and attic trusses	✓	✓
Import / Export		
Convert 3D View to Symbol - Round-trip convert a view to a library item	✓	No
Drag-and-Drop Symbol creation - Drag a 3D file into a plan to create a symbol	✓	✓
Import 3D files to create custom symbols and content - 3D DXF, DWG, OBJ, 3DS, SKP files	✓	DXF, OBJ, 3DS, & SKP
3D Symbol Mass Import - import a group of 3D objects at once	✓	No
Import and Export 2D DXF files	✓	✓
DWG compatibility with AutoCAD® 2007 and prior	✓	No
POV-Ray (.POV) Rendering Export	✓	No
Import terrain elevation data	✓	✓



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Comparison Features	Full	
Image files BMP, JPG, GIF, PCS, TIFF, PCX, and PNG formats - create materials, backdrops, or images that can be added to the library	✓	✓
Import Metafiles	✓	✓
Export .AVI Virtual Walkthroughs	✓	✓
Export 3D VRML for rendering or virtual walkthrough	✓	No
Export Materials List to Microsoft Excel, CSV, TXT, or HTML format	✓	✓
Image import - specify transparency color, add plant or image information and save to Library	✓	✓
Import Line Styles directly to the Library Browser	✓	No
Export PNG & TGA Raytraced Renderings	✓	No
Layers		
Layer Sets: Store and retrieve your User Layer configurations	✓	No
Active Layer Set toolbar button allows you to quickly swap active layer sets	✓	No
Layers to control labels for fixtures, furniture, plants, and more	✓	✓
Advanced layer mapping to assist with DXF/DWG import	✓	No
User-defined layers to organize any object in the plan	✓	No
Layer Set Defaults dialog allows you to assign views to layer sets	✓	No
Layer Set Management dialog provides easy access and editability to layer sets	✓	No
Ability to name, add, remove layers	✓	No
Ability to choose which layers display in 2D, display in 3D, and are used in Material List	✓	Limited
Ability to Import / Export Layer Sets	✓	No
Ability to Snap to Reference Floor layer	✓	No
Layer Painter tool	✓	No
Layer Eyedropper tool	✓	No
Libraries		
Create your own custom Library items	✓	Limited
Access to complete extended library with SSA	✓	Limited
Download and Import Brand Name catalogs with SSA	✓	Limited
Library Search tool	✓	✓
New Library Browser with items organized to be found more easily - searching speed is significantly faster	✓	✓
Rotate, Spin and Zoom the library preview - examine Library items before placing in your plan	✓	✓
Visual feedback for the size and orientation of objects being placed from the library and edited in plan and 3D views	✓	✓
Search for library items by style	✓	✓
Drag-and-drop materials from the library	✓	✓
Lighting / Electrical		
Auto Place outlets tool places outlets at regular intervals based on room type	✓	✓
Specify Electrical, Fixture, and Furniture items to attached to ceilings and roofs - objects can also be specified to auto-rotate and match the pitch	✓	No
Build a complete electrical plan	✓	✓
Mechanical, Electrical, Plumbing toolbar configuration makes design & layout work easy	✓	No
Complete electrical tools: lights, switches, outlets, cable, telephone, and more	✓	✓
Define custom lighting with shadows, attenuation and intensity	✓	✓
Define sun angles by season, specific date, and time-of-day to cast shadows for Render Views	✓	✓
Light fixtures have appropriate light sources associated with them for Render and Raytrace Views	✓	Render View Only
Schedules for electrical objects	✓	No
Edit Lighting properties of electrical objects directly from the Library	✓	No
Materials List / Schedule of Materials / Cost Estimating		
Automatically generate Materials List for entire plan, single room, or defined area	✓	✓
Automatic Materials List with columns for equipment, unit costs, percent markup, and labor costs have the ability to change order of the columns	✓	✓
Save and load Materials Lists for editing and comparison	✓	✓
Export Materials Lists to Microsoft Excel, CSV, TXT, or HTML format	✓	✓
Automatic Schedule of Materials for Doors, Windows, Cabinets, Fixtures, Furniture, HVAC, Electrical and Plumbing	✓	No
Automatic Room Finish Schedule	✓	No
Automatic Plant Schedule	✓	✓
Specify which layers are used when calculating Materials List	✓	No
Plants display in Materials List	✓	✓
Plans and Layouts		
Maximum number of floors (excluding roof, attic, and foundation)	(30)	(3)
Create full working drawings and blueprints	✓	Limited
Customize and specify your default layout template files	✓	No
Reorder the Layout pages for construction documents	✓	No
Customize and specify your default plan template files	✓	No
Plan Database tools for browsing, searching, and organizing plans	✓	No
Plan Check provides a review for basic room egress, roof, wall layout, and more	✓	✓



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Comparison Features	Chief Architect X2 Full	Home Designer Pro 9
IRC - access to Residential Code Checklist - check your design against National Building Codes	✓	✓
Reference floor tools to assist with layout and wall alignment	✓	✓
Send views, details, sections and elevations to Layouts	✓	✓
Pages per Layout file	1,000	1
Automatically update Layout with plan changes	✓	✓
Edit Area tools: relocate defined area, reflect area, copy area, copy floors	✓	✓
Time Tracker™: Measure working time per project, per client, or per task	✓	No
Project Browser allows you to quickly navigate cross-sections, cameras, details, and 3D views	✓	No
Text Leader Line tool quickly creates callouts and notes	✓	No
Designer and Client Information text macros	✓	No
Printing		
Maximum printed paper size:	No limit	18" x 24"
Print to file for outsourcing print job	✓	✓
Print Preview Mode displays printable area, paper edges, and line weights	✓	✓
Scale-to-Page or Paper Size	✓	✓
Page Setup - determine plan sheet size and specify how it prints to different paper size	✓	✓
Custom plan sheet sizes, span printing across multiple pages	✓	✓
Roofs		
Build Automatic Roofs	✓	✓
Custom Roof and Ceiling tools	✓	✓
Complete roof tools: fully editable roof planes, gable lines, skylights, dormers, hip roofs, gable roofs, knee walls, manual roof tools, automatic roofs, and more	✓	✓
Roof Layer Controls - specify the thickness of roof components	✓	✓
Default truss styles: step down, girder, sub-girder, drop hip, scissors, jacks, attic, and more	✓	✓
Valley fill roof trusses	✓	No
Automatic generation of truss details	✓	No
Auto Dormer™ Tool for floating (decorative) and structural dormer creation	✓	✓
Curved Roofs and ceilings	✓	No
Eyebrow Dormers	✓	No
Auto Roof Returns™	✓	✓
Control Roof Overhangs per wall	✓	✓
Fascia and Sub Fascia Control - control the size and display of fascia boards	✓	✓
Control the size of Roof Blocking and Bridging	✓	✓
Custom Exposed Rafter Tails -- apply custom profiles to display rafter tails	✓	No
Customized Gutters and Frieze moldings	✓	No
Stairs / Railings		
Advanced Stair tools: custom landings, curved sections, flared treads, starter treads, winders, definable walk line, maintainable tread width, and more	✓	✓
Handrails on walls next to stairs, and around corners	✓	✓
Assign custom Newels and Balusters to Stairs or Railings	✓	No
Set Newel and Baluster width, height, and style	✓	✓
Stair Runners and Brackets	✓	Runners only
Custom Handrails for Stairs and Railings, set thickness, width and height	✓	Width/Height only
Wrap Around Stairs connect treads around corners	✓	✓
One-Click™ Stairs auto place stairs from house to terrain	✓	✓
Auto Stairwell™ - creates stairwell to match staircase	✓	✓
Customizable curved stair treads and flared stairs	✓	✓
Terrain / Roads / Sidewalks / Fencing / Decks		
Road, Road Median, Road Striping/Marking, Curb, Gutter, Driveway, Sidewalk and Cul-de-sac tools with automatic sidewalk generation	✓	No
Generate a 3D terrain model based on elevation data you enter or import	✓	✓
Create plot plans with accurate length, bearing and setback information	✓	✓
Subdivision and site planning	✓	No
Import terrain elevation data from a text file or from DWG/DXF CAD data	✓	No
New spline and polyline driveway tools	✓	No
Terrain image Library for custom landscaping - Trees, Shrubs, and Flowers can be placed in 3D	4,000+ Items	HPro Level 2,000+ Items
3D Plant symbols	700+ Items	No
Display plant labels in plan views	✓	✓
Plan view plant symbols with fill	✓	✓
Assign fill colors to plants in plan view	✓	✓
Fence Tool - create picket, privacy, iron, glass rail, etc.	✓	Limited
Terrain Modifiers - Hills, Valleys, Elevated Regions, and more	✓	✓
Automatic deck framing for post-and-beam construction	✓	✓
Deck Structure can be specified in Room Specification dialog	✓	✓
Control the orientation and size of deck planking	✓	✓
Grow plants in Plan view	✓	✓
Retaining Walls, Terrain Break tools	✓	✓



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Comparison Features	Full	Pro 9
Sprinkler Designer™ Tools	✓	✓
Plant Encyclopedia™ with detailed information about plants	✓	✓
Plant Chooser™ with Hardiness Zone maps	✓	✓
Plants display in Materials List	✓	✓
Retaining walls with built-in terrain breaks	✓	✓
Import GPS Data Wizard	✓	✓
Walls		
Create raked and stepped walls	✓	✓
Predefined, customizable wall styles: interior, exterior, railings, pony walls and more	✓	✓
Create new custom wall styles or definitions	✓	No
Curved Walls	✓	✓
Create Walls at any angle	✓	✓
Default foundation types: post and beam, footings, slabs, piers & pads, stem walls, grade beam	✓	✓
Wall Corner boards and Quoins	✓	✓
Align walls with walls on another floor (individually or group selected), use floor reference feature to help wall alignment	✓	✓
Improved pony walls - control window and door display, dimensions, alignment between floors	✓	✓
Define wall materials as lumber or steel	✓	✓
Steel framing with C-Channels and U-Channels	✓	No
Curved wall controls for radius, center, and ends	✓	✓
Automatic Frieze Moldings	✓	No
Display wall length as you draw	✓	✓
Place new, existing, demolition walls on any layer in plan	✓	No
Wall Coverings, wallpaper borders	✓	✓
Continuous Draw Mode speeds up wall draw time	✓	No
Double Walls/Window/Door Control for marriage walls and multi-family dwellings	✓	No
Generate Auto Roof Returns™ for any wall	✓	✓
Terrain walls that follow terrain contours	✓	✓
2D and 3D wall editing	✓	✓
Training / Support / General		
Support and Software Assurance (SSA) Benefits	Optional	No
Training video products, with how-to tutorials	7 products 25,000+ Additional Items	Limited
Free downloadable Monthly Bonus Content		✓
Support added for Brand-Name catalogs of doors, windows, and cabinets	✓	No
Free downloadable Chief Viewer™ allows clients to view your work from home	✓	No
Technical phone support (toll)	Premium	Basic
Priority Support by phone & e-mail	✓	No
Green Product Development	✓	✓
Training Video Access Online	✓	✓
Electronic Reference Manual and Users Guide	✓	✓
Product Packaging reduced from 5lbs to 1/2 lb	✓	✓
Unlimited online technical support with Help Database and How-To Solution Finder™	✓	✓
Satisfaction money back guarantee	30-Days	30-Days