



FIELD GUIDE / 2026 EDITION

Who Signs Off **What**, and When

The named roles that approve a visualisation at each gate, what each one is genuinely qualified to judge, and how to stop a late arrival reopening a closed decision.

[START HERE](#)

Most delays are not production delays

When a visualisation runs late, the render rarely caused it. The cause is almost always that somebody approved something they were not in a position to judge, or that somebody with the authority to stop the job saw it for the first time at the end.

A visualisation passes through three decisions that cannot be undone cheaply. Each one locks the one before it. Reopening geometry after light has been signed off does not cost slightly more than deciding it on time — it costs the light as well, on every frame in the set.

Gate 01 Geometry

Is this the right building, seen from the right place. Massing, storey heights, openings, camera position, lens, what is in frame and what is cropped out.

Locks everything. A camera move after this is a new image, not a revision.

Gate 02 Light & materials

Is this the right surface at the right hour. Finishes, colour, reflectivity, time of day, sky, season, planting maturity.

Locks the mood and ties every frame in the set to every other one.

Gate 03 Final

Is this the file we publish. Crop, resolution, retouching, people and vehicles, clear space for text, disclaimer.

Locks nothing further — which is precisely why nothing structural may be raised here.

Each gate should close in writing before the next one opens. That is a shape, not a promise about duration: how long a gate stays open depends entirely on the project and on the people named in it. The rest of this guide is about those people.



Maverick Frame production render.

THE CHAIN

Who is qualified to judge what

Names, not departments. Everybody in this table will have an opinion about the image. Only some of them hold an opinion that should be able to stop production.

ROLE	GATE	JUDGES, AND SIGNS	SHOULD NOT BE DECIDING
Project architect / design lead	01, 02	Geometry, proportion, whether materials match the specification, whether the building is represented truthfully	Which frame sells the scheme, or what the caption says
Client or developer principal	01, 03	Whether the scheme reads as the product being funded, and the final image	Storey heights and window reveals — that is Gate 01, and it closed
Marketing / brand lead	03	Crop, ratio, tone, clear space for text, channel fit	Massing and material specification
Sales lead	01, 03	Whether the image answers what buyers ask, and whether the right unit types and spaces are covered	Lens choice and lighting mood
Landscape architect	02	Species, planting maturity, hard landscaping, levels	The building
Planning consultant / legal	01, 03	Whether the image is defensible: accuracy, context included, disclaimer wording	Aesthetics — and their view on the first column is not optional
Technical / engineering	01	Structure visible in interiors, plant, risers, anything that will exist and is missing from the model	Colour, styling and dressing
Investor or external partner	—	Nothing, unless named in this chain before Gate 01 opens	Anything at all, if they first appear after Gate 02

The last row causes the damage. **An unnamed stakeholder with real authority and no place in the chain is the most expensive thing that can happen to a visualisation programme.** The cure is free and takes ten minutes: list everybody who could plausibly comment, before the first gate, and decide which of them approve and which are merely informed.

STEP 02

When a late arrival overrules a closed gate

It will happen. What matters is that the cost becomes visible before the instruction is given, rather than after the work has been discarded.

01 Establish what actually changed

A new fact, or a late preference? A changed facade specification or a neighbouring consent landing is a legitimate reopening. A preference is a paid change, and saying so plainly at this moment is the whole job.

02 Name the gate being reopened, out loud

"This reopens Gate 01" is a sentence that ends half of these conversations by itself, because it converts a casual comment into a decision with a named owner.

03 Put the downstream consequence in writing first

Reopening geometry discards approved light and approved final work across every frame in the set — not only the frame being discussed. Send that sentence before anyone agrees to anything.

04 Have the original approver re-approve

The person who signed that gate is told it is being undone and signs the replacement. Silent overruling is how the same argument arrives a second time, later, louder.

05 Decide whether the whole set moves or only one frame

One re-lit frame inside an otherwise approved set will not match it. Either accept that visibly or re-run the set. Do not discover it at print.

06 Log it in one line, in the same place as the approvals

Not buried in an email thread. One log, one location, legible to whoever inherits the project in six months.

Four rules that stop it happening again

- Name every approver before Gate 01 opens — including the ones who will only look at the end
- Circulate the geometry gate to everyone, even people whose sign-off is not required. Seeing it early is nearly free; seeing it late is not
- Give each gate a stated close in writing, and treat silence as unapproved rather than as approval
- Give one named person the authority to break a tie. Without that, the last loud voice wins — and the last voice is always the latest arrival

STEP 03

The sign-off sheet

One per gate. Deliberately short: a gate, a single line describing exactly what is being approved, a name, a date. Anything longer does not get filled in.

PROJECT / VIEW REFERENCE

GATE — 01 GEOMETRY · 02 LIGHT AND MATERIALS · 03 FINAL

WHAT IS BEING APPROVED, IN ONE LINE

WHAT THIS GATE LOCKS, AND WHAT REOPENING IT DISCARDS

APPROVER — NAME

ROLE

SIGNED

DATE / GATE CLOSES

CIRCULATED FOR INFORMATION — NOT APPROVAL, AND NOT ENTITLED TO REOPEN THIS GATE

NAME AND ROLE

NAME AND ROLE

NAME AND ROLE

REOPENED AFTER CLOSING	WHAT IT DISCARDS
Gate 01 — geometry	Approved light, approved materials and any final work, on every frame in the set. The most expensive sentence anyone can say in a review.
Gate 02 — light, materials	Final work on the affected frames, and the match between them and any frame already approved.
Gate 03 — final	Least of the three, and the only one that should ever be routine. Crops, retouching and text space belong here by design.

These are consequences, not prices. Ask your studio to quote a reopening before you authorise it — the shape of the damage is the same everywhere, the number is not.

WORKING WITH A STUDIO

Cost, and how to brief it

Two things people ask us before anything else. Both answers are short.

COMMISSIONED WORK	FREELANCER	STUDIO
Single exterior still	\$100 – 300	\$250 – 600
Single interior still	\$120 – 350	\$300 – 700
Package, 5–8 views	\$600 – 1,500	\$1,500 – 4,000
Animation, per minute	\$1,000 – 3,000	\$3,000 – 8,000

Market ranges we are willing to publish. Turnaround and revision-round figures are deliberately not in this table: ours vary too much by project type to state as a benchmark, and an invented number here would be worse than none.

How to brief it — shorter is better

This is the opposite of what most people assume. Four things:

- What you need — **how many images, and of what**
- The plans and elevations, as they are
- A few reference images for mood and light
- One clear line on what the images are *for*

Inflating a small job into a fifty-page specification backfires: taken literally it comes out ugly, and it misleads the people doing the work. Tell them the intent and let the team that does this daily handle the detail.

The mistake that costs the most

The biggest failure we see is not choosing the wrong vendor. It is **timing**. People start looking only after the first supplier has already failed and the deadline is on fire, then choose in a panic.

Line up and vet rendering partners **before** you need one. One, ideally a few, briefed and ready to take work. It costs an afternoon now and saves a project later.

10+

YEARS RENDERING
VISUAL STORYTELLING

350+

BRANDS & AGENCIES
EMPOWERED GLOBALLY

95%

CLIENT
SATISFACTION RATE

40%+

OF OUR COMMISSIONS NOW
INCLUDE MOTION OR 360

When the image has to hold up, **talk to us**

We are a CGI studio: architectural and product rendering, 3D modelling, animation, 360 tours and VR. Ten years, 350+ brands and agencies, and the kind of work that still looks right when somebody counts the windows.

Send us the plans and a line on what the images are for. You get a scope and a price, and no obligation to use either.

START HERE

maverickframe.com/contacts

SEE THE WORK

maverickframe.com/gallery

WRITTEN BY

Dim Kuzmenko

Co-Founder



Maverick Frame production render. · Cost ranges are market ranges as of 2026 and are not a quotation.