



FIELD GUIDE / 2026 EDITION

Planted at 3 Metres. Rendered at 12. Which One Did You Sell?

How a landscape architect buys renders: planting at the right size, season and light, eye level against aerial, a priced set of views and the brief to send.

START HERE

Drawn in plan, judged at eye level

A landscape scheme is drawn in plan and judged at eye level. Planting, paving and water only make sense to a client at a time of day and a season, and the planting plan says neither. The render has to decide both, and the size of every tree on the day of the view.

Most of the waste we see comes from leaving those decisions to whoever builds the scene. The landscape travels inside the architect's model as flat green, library trees stand in for the species on the schedule, and everything is shown mature on a summer afternoon. The client signs off on year ten. The planning officer, the residents and later the buyers compare it with what goes in on the day.

WHAT THE DRAWING SAYS		WHAT THE RENDER HAS TO DECIDE	
01	Species and sizes on the schedule	How big each plant is in the view: as planted, at year five or mature.	
02	A planting plan	The season: flowering, bare branches, autumn colour, the share of evergreen.	
03	Paving, walls and levels	The light. Low sun shows texture and steps; flat noon light hides them.	
04	The masterplan	The camera. Eye level sells the space; an aerial explains the layout.	

Pick the year before the season.

Growth stage changes a view more than any material. A tree that goes in at 3 metres and is shown at 12 is the image a planner or a buyer will quote back to you. Say which year each view shows, and the season follows.



Maverick Frame production render.

THE LANDSCAPE SET

One scheme, priced line by line

A composite of the landscape schemes studios bring us, a residential courtyard with a public edge, priced at our published rate of \$39 an hour. Three eye-level views, an aerial, and the season, growth and dusk variants from one camera. The last line is the same comparison ordered as three new views.

DELIVERABLE		BASIS	AT \$39 AN HOUR
01	Landscape model from your plans: levels, paving, walls, water	20 h	\$780
02	Planting from your schedule, species set up once for every view	16 h	\$624
03	Eye-level hero of the main space, in the season you choose	1 x 16 h	\$624
04	Two further eye-level views along the routes people walk	2 x 16 h	\$1,248
05	Aerial of the whole scheme and its edges	1 x 16 h	\$624
06	Season variants of the hero camera: autumn and winter	2 x 5 h	\$390
07	Growth stage variant of the hero: planting as it goes in	1 x 5 h	\$195
08	Dusk view with the lighting scheme on	1 x 6 h	\$234
Planned as one model with variants, 121 hours			\$4,719
Season and growth ordered as three new views, not variants			+ \$1,287
Variants of one camera			\$4,719
Three new views instead			\$6,006

SHOT	WHAT IT SHOWS	WHERE IT IS USED
Eye-level hero	The space as people use it	Client sign-off, brochure, awards
Aerial	Layout, routes, how the scheme meets the building	Masterplan boards, consultation
Winter variant	Structure planting, evergreen share, paving	Planning, year-round claims
As-planted variant	Planting at the size it goes in	Planning, the client's expectations
Dusk	The lighting scheme, how safe the routes feel	Lighting design, residents

Order the as-planted view with the hero.

As a variant of the hero camera it costs \$195. Asked for later by the planning officer, it is a new view from a new camera, at \$624.

MISTAKES

Mistakes from your side of the table

These are lines we read in landscape briefs almost every month. Each is reasonable on a drawing and expensive once the images have been approved.

WHAT LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS WRITE	WHAT TO WRITE INSTEAD
01 'Lush, mature planting'	The year shown: as planted, year five or mature. If the view goes to planning or to buyers, show at least one at planting size.
02 'Use appropriate trees'	Send the planting schedule with species and sizes. We match species from it and flag where a stand-in is used.
03 'Summer, sunny'	The month, and why. Spring flowering or autumn colour may carry the scheme better; winter shows what the structure planting does.
04 'One aerial of the whole site'	One aerial for the layout and at least one eye-level view for the experience. The aerial explains; eye level is what the client remembers.
05 'Show the water feature'	Still or moving, lit or not, and the hour. Water reads as a dark patch in flat light.
06 'The landscape is in the architect's model'	Send your own drawings: levels, paving pattern, walls, lighting. The building model usually carries landscape as flat green.
07 'People enjoying the space'	Who uses it and when: children after school, office workers at lunch, residents in the evening. Light and planting follow that hour.

Your planting, not our library.

Where a species on your schedule has no close match, we say so in the first draft, so nobody signs off on a tree that will not be planted. We work white-label, under your name.

Before a planting view goes to planning

- ☐ Plants at the sizes on the schedule, with the year of the view stated.
- ☐ One view in winter, or a note on the share of evergreen.
- ☐ Existing trees and real levels kept, not smoothed away.
- ☐ The camera at eye height from a place the public can stand.
- ☐ The season and the year written in the caption.

THE ONE PAGE

What landscape architects actually send us

The studios whose logos sit on our service pages do not send landscape specifications. For a scheme they send something close to this, with the plans attached in whatever state they are in, and it is enough to quote from.

01	The scheme	The landscape plan in DWG or PDF, with levels.
02	Planting schedule	Species, sizes at planting and spacing.
03	The building	The architect's model or massing, and who sends it.
04	Hard landscape	Paving, walls, furniture and play, with product sheets.
05	Water and lighting	Features and fittings, and when they are on.
06	Views	Eye level and aerial, how many, ranked.
07	Season and year	The month and the growth stage for each view.
08	Use	Who is in the space, and at what hour.
09	The dates	First drafts, planning submission, consultation.
10	The budget	Your figure, and whether it sits in your fee or with the client.

Variants from one camera

Season, growth stage and dusk as variants of one camera cost a fraction of a new view, and let the client compare like with like.

One model to the end

The planting set up for the first view is kept. The consultation views, the brochure and the aerial all start from it.

WHAT THINGS COST

Market rates and our terms, so you can check any quote

Ranges seen across the market in 2026, freelancer to studio. Use them to sanity-check any quote, including ours.

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

Our standard timelines and revision terms. They are what we quote unless a project needs something else, and we say so before work starts.

STAGE OR DELIVERABLE	MAVERICK FRAME STANDARD
First draft of a still	3 to 5 working days from a complete brief
Finished stills, package of 5 - 8	2 to 3 weeks, drafts included
Animation, up to one minute	4 to 6 weeks, storyboard and preview first
Revision rounds included	Two at draft stage, one on the final image
What counts as a round	One consolidated list of comments, sent at once
Rush delivery	Half the time for about 40% more, when the schedule allows

Line up a studio before the deadline is on fire

The most expensive projects we see are not the badly briefed ones. They are the ones briefed in a panic, after the first supplier failed and the launch date did not move. Vet one or two studios while nothing is urgent.

A note on in-house: one artist needs around ten software subscriptions, a workstation and a stack of adjacent skills - modelling, lighting, post-production and client communication. It pays off only when that person is busy every day. Below that, the arithmetic favours outsourcing on its own.

NEXT

Send us the plan and the planting schedule

The landscape plan, the planting schedule, levels and the architect's model, in whatever state they are in. We will reply with a scope, a price and the questions that decide it - as a reply, not a sales call.

The contact form	maverickframe.com/contacts/
Studio rendering	maverickframe.com/solutions/3d-rendering-for-architecture-and-design-studios/
Or simply	reply to the email this guide arrived in.

Written by the people who read these briefs

Dim Kuzmenko is the founder of Maverick Frame Studio. The figures in this guide come from our own inbox and our own rate card, not from an industry survey.