



FIELD GUIDE / 2026 EDITION

Twelve Questions Before the Renders Redesign Your Park.

Ask them before you sign a park rendering contract. A studio worth hiring answers all twelve in one email. The wrong one goes quiet when you ask how it renders your planting schedule.

START HERE

Every failure was visible before you signed

Park rendering projects rarely fail on image quality. Green lawns and sunny plazas are in every portfolio. They fail on the five things below, and every one of them could have been spotted in the first email, if anyone had asked.

WHAT THE SALES CALL PROMISED	WHAT YOU FIND OUT IN WEEK THREE
01 "Officials will understand it at once"	The set is three moody eye-level views. Nobody on the approval panel can tell where the park sits or how the paths connect, and the questions the plan already answers come back again.
02 "We will make the park look its best"	Extra trees, a fountain nobody designed, different paving. The landscape architect cannot stand behind images that quietly redesign the park at a public meeting.
03 "Photoreal planting, of course"	Library trees, fully grown on opening day, and lawns no park can keep. The images promise a park the planting schedule cannot deliver.
04 "A beautiful setting for the project"	The park floats on a blank background. The streets, buildings and neighbours it is meant to serve are missing, and residents cannot find their own street.
05 "Changes are no problem"	The consultation moves a path and swaps the benches, and each change is quoted as a new render. The scene lives with someone else, and the images stop matching the design.

You are not choosing a portfolio. You are choosing a process.

The twelve questions on the next two pages test the process. Each one maps to one of the failures above, and each has an answer you can check.



Maverick Frame production render.

THE TEST, PART ONE

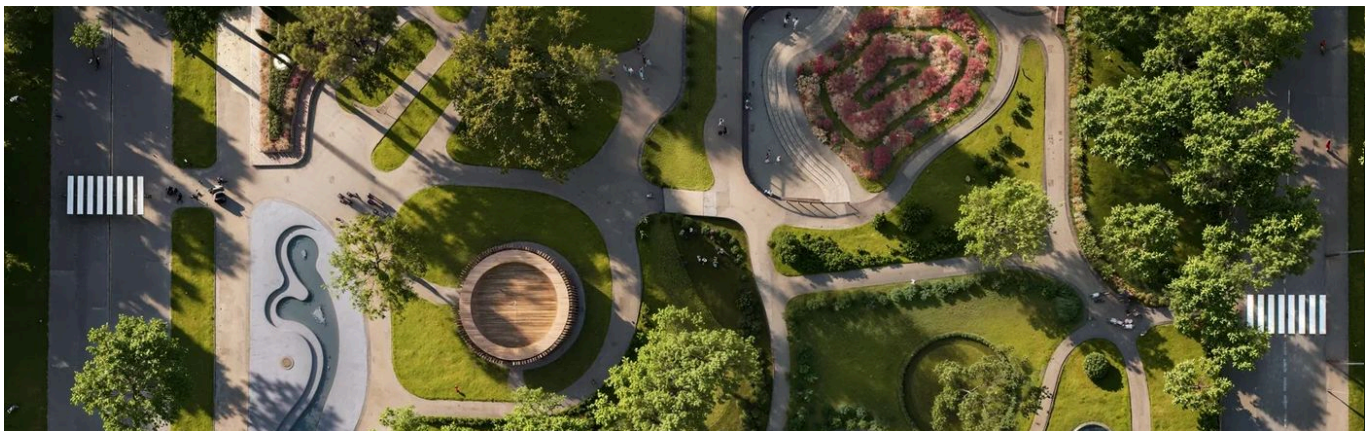
Questions 1 to 6: the plan, the planting, the date

Send these as they are. You are not looking for enthusiasm; you are looking for numbers, names and dates. Vague answers are an answer too.

ASK THIS	A GOOD ANSWER SOUNDS LIKE	WALK AWAY IF
1. What do you need from us to render the park?	The landscape plan with levels, the planting schedule, materials and furniture, and a site plan with the buildings around it.	"Just send a sketch, we will imagine the rest."
2. Will you follow our plans exactly, or improve them?	Levels, planting, paving, furniture and cameras follow your documents, and any suggested change is agreed before final rendering.	"We usually add a bit more green."
3. How do you render the planting from our schedule?	Species and sizes taken from the schedule, with the option to show the park at opening and again a few seasons later.	"Our library has lots of nice trees."
4. When would I see the first draft, counted from a complete brief?	A number of working days, 3 to 5 for a still, 2 to 3 weeks for a set of 5 to 8 views, and what "complete" means.	"As soon as possible" or no number at all.
5. What happens if the approval meeting moves forward by a week?	A rush option with a price, roughly half the time for around 40% more.	"We'll make it work" with no price attached.
6. How many revision rounds are included, and what counts as one?	A fixed number, typically two at draft and one on the final, with a round defined as one consolidated list.	"Unlimited revisions."

Why questions 2 and 3 matter most

A park is judged against a plan and a planting schedule. The landscape architect knows every level and species, and residents will walk the finished paths. Both are decided by what the studio asks for, and promises to keep, before it starts.



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THE TEST, PART TWO

Questions 7 to 12: changes, context, files

ASK THIS

A GOOD ANSWER SOUNDS LIKE

WALK AWAY IF

7. When the consultation changes a path or the planting, what do you update?

The existing scene: the path, planting or furniture is changed in the model and the same cameras are rendered again.

A new quote for each change, from scratch.

8. How do you show the streets and buildings around the park?

A simple 3D context from the site plan, or the renders set into your site and drone photos where it matters.

"We put it on a nice background."

9. Can you render a top-down plan view as well as aerials and eye-level views?

Yes, from the same scene, so the plan, the aerial and the eye-level views always match.

"A plan is a different job."

10. Which formats do you deliver for the approval file, the meeting and the press?

Print resolution for boards and the approval file, presentation and web files, social crops, agreed before cameras are framed.

"We send JPEGs, you resize them."

11. Can a flythrough of the park come from the same model?

Yes, with a storyboard and a path for the camera before rendering, and the length stated up front.

"We'd bring in a partner for that."

12. Who exactly will model and render the project, and is any part passed on?

Named roles on the studio's own team, or an honest "yes, the vegetation library" with the reason.

"Our network", a pause, or silence.

10 - 12

GOOD ANSWERS: HIRE, AND ASK FOR THE FIRST DRAFT DATE IN WRITING

7 - 9

ASK FOR ONE PAID TEST VIEW BEFORE COMMITTING THE SET

0 - 6

WALK AWAY, HOWEVER STRONG THE PORTFOLIO LOOKS

The question studios dodge most often is number 12

Subcontracting is common and not always bad. Hiding it is the problem, because you cannot fix a wrong species or a missed approval date with a team you are not allowed to talk to. Ask it plainly and listen to how long the answer takes.



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SEND IT

One email, three studios, one day

You do not need a call to run the test. Paste the email below, attach what you already have, and send it to the three studios on your shortlist at the same time. Replies arrive within a working day, and the difference between them is usually obvious by the second paragraph.

THE EMAIL TO SEND

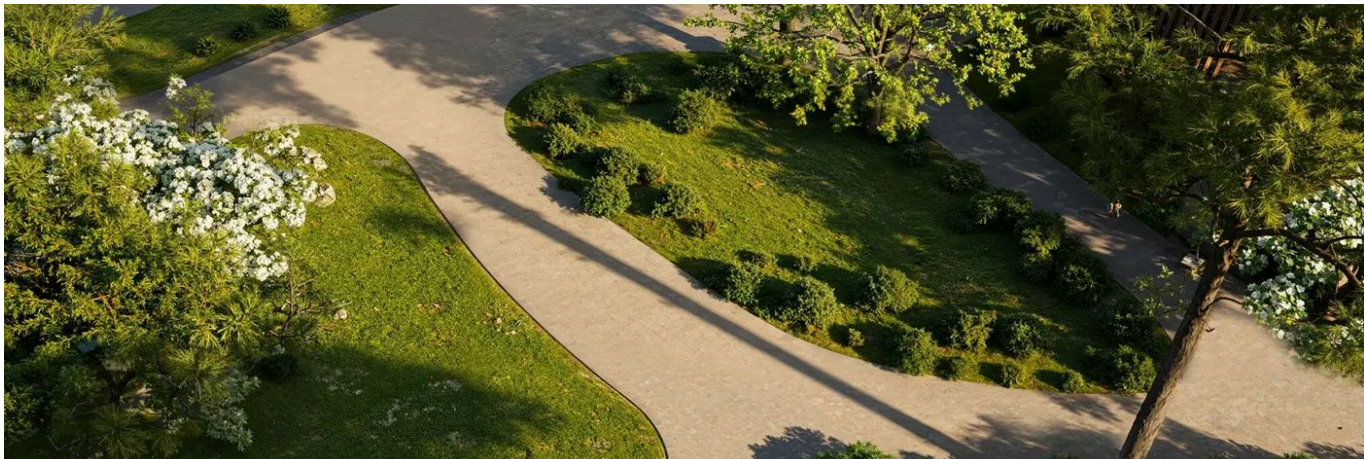
01	Subject	Park renders for [project], quote and twelve questions
02	Line 1	We need [number] views of [a city park / a plaza / a streetscape / residential courtyards] in [place] for [the tender / approval / the public consultation / the opening] by [date].
03	Line 2	Attached: the landscape plan with levels, the planting schedule, the site plan, site or drone photos if we have them, and two references.
04	Line 3	Please answer the twelve questions below with numbers and names, not ranges.
05	Line 4	Paste questions 1 to 12 from pages 03 and 04.
06	Line 5	We will decide within a week of receiving all three replies.

What good replies have in common

They are short. They answer in working days and dollars, name the people, and ask you one or two questions back about the planting and who has to approve the images.

What we would answer

Our own numbers are on the next page, in the same format, so you can score us with the same test.



Maverick Frame production render.

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 what you already have

Plans, a model, photographs or a draft brief, 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/
Park work	maverickframe.com/solutions/park-rendering/
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.