



FIELD GUIDE / 2026 EDITION

Hiring a CGI Studio Outside **London**

Volume housing is a different commission: house-type libraries, siting variants, street scenes, regional vernacular, and why building once beats commissioning per site.



START HERE

Volume housing is a different commission

Most CGI advice written in the UK is written about London: single tall buildings, dense context, planning visuals against marketing visuals. Outside it, the commission that dominates is a different animal — a housebuilder with a dozen house types, twenty sites and the same detached four-bed appearing in Cheshire, Cornwall and County Durham.

Buying that the way you would buy a signature scheme is the most reliable way to overspend in regional CGI. The asset you want is not a set of images. It is a library.

	ONE-OFF SIGNATURE SCHEME	HOUSE-TYPE PROGRAMME
What is modelled	This building, this site.	Each house type once, then sited repeatedly.
How many images	A defined set.	An open-ended stream: plots, street scenes, brochures, portal listings, boards.
Lifespan	Until it is built.	As long as the type stays in the range — which is years.
Cost driver	Hours on one model.	Whether type one can be re-sited without rebuilding.
Good looks like	One unforgettable image.	Forty images that are consistent, correct and cheap after the first.

If your project is actually a dense urban site — verified views, nominated viewpoints, cumulative context, planning against marketing — that is a genuinely different subject and we have written it separately. Ask us for the London guide. The rest of this one assumes houses, sites and a range.

STEP 01

What actually goes into a house-type library

A library is not "the models we happen to have". It is a defined, named, versioned set built to be recombined. This is the scope to agree before anyone starts.

COMPONENT	WHAT IT HAS TO CONTAIN TO BE REUSABLE
The house types	Each type, at real-world scale, with both handings. A mirrored plot is not a new model if the type was built properly, and is a full rebuild if it was not.
Elevation options	Brick blends, render, stone, cladding, roof tile, window and door colours — as separated, named materials. This is where the cheap variety comes from.
Add-on geometry	Porches, bays, garages, carports, chimneys, dormers, solar arrays. Geometry costs more than a material swap, so agree the option list once and build them all.
Plot context kit	Driveway finishes, fences, walls, gates, bin and cycle stores, EV charge points, meter boxes, house numbers. Missing kit is what makes a render look like a brochure of nowhere.
Landscape kit	Regional planting, hedging, verges, street trees at a stated year of growth, grass that is not the same green everywhere.
Street furniture	Lamp columns, signage, kerbs, drop crossings, tactile paving, road markings.
People and cars	Chosen to match the market the site sells into. A supercar on the drive of a two-bed starter home is a real and recurring error.
Skies and weather	A small set, agreed, reused. It is what makes twenty sites read as one brand.

Agree the naming convention on day one

Something like `site_plot_type_handing_elevation_view.jpg`, decided before the first file exists. Libraries do not fail because the modelling is bad. They fail because after three years nobody can find the right version of the Ashbourne, and a new studio quotes to rebuild it.

STEP 02

The economics, and the vernacular that gives you away

The library argument is not a discount argument. It is a shape-of-spend argument, and it only works if the first site is deliberately over-invested in.

WHAT YOU ASK FOR	COMMISSIONED PER SITE	COMMISSIONED AS A LIBRARY
First site	Full build.	Full build, plus deliberate extra to make everything reusable.
Second site, same types	Full build again.	Siting, landscape and dressing only.
Tenth site	Full build again.	Siting and dressing, and by now faster than anyone expected.
A new elevation option	New images everywhere.	A material added once, applied across every type that uses it.
A new house type	Another one-off.	One build, then available to every future site.
Range or brand refresh	Re-shoot everything.	Re-render from existing cameras with the new palette.

We have deliberately not put numbers in that table. The shape is the point: the library is more expensive once and cheaper every time after, and the crossover comes sooner than most housebuilders assume. Ask any studio quoting you to price both columns for **your** actual site pipeline, not in general.

The vernacular that gives a studio away

Brick colour and bond, slate against pantile, render in the west, stone in the dales, roof pitch, eaves detail, boundary treatment, the planting in a verge, and the sky. A Mediterranean-blue sky over a Yorkshire site reads wrong to a local buyer who could not tell you why. Ask a shortlisted studio to show regional work, and show them a photograph of a completed site as the reference.

Siting variants and street scenes

The two things that sell a regional site are a street scene that shows how the place feels and a plot-accurate view of the house someone is actually reserving. Both come from the same library. Agree at the start how many of each per site, and insist that street scenes use the true plot layout — buyers do compare the render to the site plan.

STEP 03

The scope sheet, and the questions to ask

Fill the box in for your own range, then put the checklist to every studio on the shortlist. It takes one afternoon and it decides several years of spend.

HOUSE TYPES IN THE RANGE, AND HOW MANY ARE ACTIVE

HANDINGS REQUIRED PER TYPE

ELEVATION / MATERIAL OPTIONS PER TYPE

ADD-ON GEOMETRY TO BE BUILT ONCE (PORCH, BAY, GARAGE, DORMER, SOLAR)

SITES IN THE PIPELINE OVER THE NEXT TWO YEARS

IMAGES PER SITE: PLOT VIEWS ____ STREET SCENES ____ INTERIORS ____

WHO HOLDS THE LIBRARY, AND IN WHICH FORMATS

- ☐ Regional UK work they can show, not only city-centre schemes

☐ They price the library and the per-site work as separate lines

☐ A stated per-site rate once the library exists

☐ Handings, elevations and add-ons quoted explicitly

☐ They will work from your site plan, not an approximation of it
- ☐ Library files handed over on request, in named formats

☐ Naming convention agreed in writing before work starts

☐ Licence covering housebuilder, agents, portals and part-exchange partners

☐ Capacity across a rolling site programme, in writing

☐ Any planning-submission requirement confirmed with the authority first



Maverick Frame production render.

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

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