



FIELD GUIDE / 2026 EDITION

Five Films, One Building. Why Pay Five Times?

Which walkthroughs to order from design to launch, which scenes and cameras carry over, and a priced composite of the whole pipeline against buying each film from scratch.

START HERE

Every film starts from nothing. Why?

Most developments end up with four or five films: a massing study, a lender film, a planning walkthrough, a sales film and a launch cut. They are usually commissioned months apart, often from different studios, and each one begins by rebuilding the same building.

The scene is the expensive part of architectural animation. Terrain, massing, facades, planting, interiors, lighting and the camera paths that took a week to agree. When the next film goes to a new vendor, all of that is paid for again, and the second problem follows: the film arrives after the meeting it was meant for, because nobody booked it while the last one was in production.

	BOUGHT STAGE BY STAGE	PLANNED AS ONE ROADMAP
01	Each film briefed as a new job	One scene, extended stage by stage
02	Cameras redesigned for every audience	Approved camera paths reused and re-cut
03	The planning film looks nothing like the sales film	One building, one light, one look across all five
04	Ordered when the meeting is already in the diary	Booked one stage ahead, while the scene is open
05	Rebuild cost hidden inside every quote	The scene paid for once, in instalments

The building does not change between stages. The bill should not reset.

A lender, a planning officer and a buyer need different films, not different buildings. Plan the scene once and each later film costs the camera work and the new rooms, not the whole model again.



Maverick Frame production render.

THE ROADMAP

Which film to order, stage by stage

Five stages, five films. The right-hand column is the part most briefs forget to ask for: the files and decisions that should be handed forward so the next film starts from a finished scene.

STAGE	ORDER THESE VISUALS	WHO USES THEM	CARRIES OVER
Design	Massing flyaround and quick camera studies, grey or lightly textured	Architect and design team	Site model, massing, first camera paths
Finance	Short aerial film with site context and phasing states	Lenders, investment committee	Context model, phasing states, aerial cameras
Approve	Eye-level walkthrough and a day to night sequence	Planning board, public consultation	Detailed facades, planting, lighting rig
Sell	Interior walkthrough, amenity sequences and a sales film	Sales gallery, project website	Furnished interiors, graded look, edit
Launch	Full flythrough with music and titles, plus social cuts	Website, ads, the opening	Master film and cut-downs for later campaigns

Start where you are

If you are at Approve, order the walkthrough now and ask for three things in the contract: the scene is modelled to a standard that interiors can be added to, the camera paths are kept, and the files stay with the studio for the sales film. Stages 4 and 5 then start from a lit, approved building.



Maverick Frame production render.

WHAT IT COSTS

The pipeline, priced both ways

A composite of a mid-size residential scheme, priced at mid-market studio rates. Film lengths and per-minute rates are the same in both totals; only the scene work changes.

LINE ITEM	BASIS	AT STUDIO RATES
01 Design: scene build, site and massing	once	\$2,400
02 Design: massing flyaround and camera studies, 45 s	0.75 min x \$4,000	\$3,000
03 Finance: site context and phasing added	scene reused from Design	\$800
04 Finance: aerial film with phasing, 60 s	1 min x \$4,500	\$4,500
05 Approve: facade detail, planting, lighting	scene reused from Finance	\$2,000
06 Approve: walkthrough 60 s, day to night 30 s	1.5 min x \$5,000	\$7,500
07 Sell: interiors and amenities added	scene reused from Approve	\$3,000
08 Sell: interior walkthrough and sales film, 2 min	2 min x \$5,500	\$11,000
09 Launch: titles, grade and sound mix	scene reused from Sell	\$600
10 Launch: full flythrough with music, 90 s	1.5 min x \$6,000	\$9,000
11 Launch: six social cuts from the master	6 x \$250	\$1,500
Design stage		\$5,400
Finance stage		\$5,300
Approve stage		\$9,500
Sell stage		\$14,000
Launch stage		\$11,100

Planned as one roadmap \$45,300

The same visuals bought stage by stage, from scratch \$64,300

The from-scratch total prices the same films at the same rates, with the scene rebuilt by each new vendor to the detail that stage needs (\$2,400 at Design rising to \$8,800 at Launch). Planned as one roadmap, the full \$8,800 scene is paid for once, in instalments, and the difference is \$19,000.

12%

DESIGN, \$5,400

12%

FINANCE, \$5,300

21%

APPROVE, \$9,500

31%

SELL, \$14,000

24%

LAUNCH, \$11,100

THE ONE PAGE

What to send us at each stage

The clients whose logos sit on our service pages do not send specifications for animation. They send what they already have and say which meeting the film is for. This is enough to quote from at every stage.

01	Design: drawings	Plans, sections and the site boundary, or the working model in any format. Say which is current.
02	Design: the question	What the team is testing: scale, views, a skyline. It decides the cameras.
03	Finance: phasing	The phases and the order they are built in, plus the date of the lender meeting.
04	Approve: the viewpoints	The streets and neighbours the planning board will look from. Mark them on a plan.
05	Approve: the planting	The landscape plan, or a line saying mature or newly planted.
06	Sell: the interiors	Finish schedules and the rooms you are selling on, with a mood reference if there is one.
07	Sell: where it plays	Sales gallery screen, website, a portal. It sets length, format and resolution.
08	Launch: the music and titles	Brand guidelines, the logo files, and whether you license the track or we do.
09	Launch: the channels	Which ad platforms the cuts run on, so we frame them for vertical and square.
10	Any stage: the date	The meeting or launch date, the real one. A film is 4 to 6 weeks per minute.

Change stage, keep the scene

Ask us to keep the scene, the cameras and the edit project at the end of every film. When the next stage comes, a new brief opens the same file, and the quote covers only what is new: rooms, lighting states, cameras.

Rates and terms overleaf

Per-minute ranges for freelancers and studios, our production times and what a revision round covers are on the next page, so you can check this quote, or anyone else's, against the market.

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/
Animation work	maverickframe.com/services/3d-architectural-animation/
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.