

MAVERICK
FRAME
STUDIO

FIELD GUIDE / 2026 EDITION

Selling Land: Images for a Site With Nothing On It

Why a massing study is the honest instrument, how to label an illustrative scheme, and the site data a studio needs before anyone can draw anything.

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START HERE

A plot is sold on something that is not there

Nobody buys a field. They buy what they believe can be built on it, how much of it, and how likely that is to be allowed. Which puts your images in a delicate position: they have to make the potential legible without asserting something that has not been granted.

That tension is the whole subject of this guide. Handled well it makes a plot easier to price and faster to sell. Handled carelessly it produces a beautiful render of a building nobody has permission for, and a buyer whose first conversation with their own adviser goes badly.

What a land buyer is working out

- How much floor area this plot plausibly carries
- What shape that area has to take, given the boundaries
- Where the access comes in and whether it works
- What the ground does — slope, levels, drainage
- What is next door, and how close
- How much of their own money goes in before anything is certain

What a finished render answers

What one particular architect's one particular scheme would look like on a summer evening, if it were approved, which it is not.

That is a narrower and less useful answer than it looks, and a sophisticated buyer discounts it immediately. Worse, it anchors them to a design they may not want and makes your plot look like it comes with strings attached.

The instrument that answers the left-hand column is a massing study, not a render. It is also cheaper, faster and far easier to defend in a conversation.

STEP 01

The massing study, and why it is honest

A massing study shows volume, not architecture. Simple forms at real scale, on a real survey, in real context, with no windows, no materials and no styling. It tells a buyer how much building fits and where — and it visibly does not pretend to be a design.

WHAT TO ASK FOR	WHAT IT DOES FOR THE BUYER
Plain volumes, one neutral material	Signals immediately that this is a study. A white or light grey mass with no openings cannot be mistaken for a proposal, which is the point.
Two or three options, not one	Denser and lower, fewer and taller, one mixed. Options show the plot's range; a single massing quietly becomes the scheme in everyone's head.
Accurate boundaries and set-backs drawn	The lines the buyer's own adviser will check first. Drawing them and labelling them as taken from the title or survey is far stronger than leaving them implied.
Surrounding buildings, to correct heights	Context is what makes a massing credible. Neighbours modelled from survey or open data, not invented blocks.
An aerial and two eye-level views	The aerial explains the plot. The eye-level views answer what it feels like from the road and from the neighbour's side, which is where objections come from.
A stated area schedule	Footprint, storeys, indicative floor area per option. Numbers the buyer can take straight into their own appraisal, with your assumptions written beside them.
Sun and shadow at two dates	Geometric, quick if planned with the model, and it pre-empts the overshadowing question rather than waiting for it.

If you do commission an illustrative scheme as well

Do it **after** the massing, not instead of it, and present it clearly as one way of using the plot rather than the way. One well-made illustrative view alongside a massing set works. An illustrative view on its own, with no massing behind it, is the version that causes trouble.



Maverick Frame production render.

STEP 02

Labelling, and the questions that are not yours to answer

Nothing on this page is advice on what any authority requires or permits. Planning and consent rules differ by jurisdiction and change, and what you may state in a land listing is a question for your own planning consultant and your own legal adviser. What follows is the list of things to put to them, in writing, before your images go anywhere.

01 **What consent, if any, does this plot actually hold today?**

Ask for it in precise terms — what was granted, on what date, subject to what conditions, and whether it is still live. Every line of your marketing has to sit inside that answer.

02 **What may we state about it, and in what words?**

The wording your consultant approves is the wording you use, unchanged, in the listing, the brochure and on every image caption. Not a summary of it.

03 **May we show a scheme that has not been granted, and how must it be labelled?**

Put the label they give you on the image itself, not only in the small print of a document the image will be separated from.

04 **Is there any requirement about how illustrative material is presented here?**

Some jurisdictions and some marketing regimes have views on this. Ask rather than assume, and ask before production rather than after.

05 **What about the neighbouring buildings we model for context?**

Ask whether showing consented but unbuilt neighbouring schemes is expected, permitted or unwise in your market.

06 **Who signs off the final images and the captions together?**

Images and captions get separated the moment a listing is syndicated. One named person should approve them as a pair, and re-approve if either changes.

Label it on the image, not next to it

Whatever wording your adviser approves, burn it into the image itself — a legible line in the frame, not a caption in a PDF. Images get screenshotted, forwarded, re-hosted and scraped into portals. The caption does not travel with them. The pixels do.

Keep a clean unlabelled version in your own archive for your consultant's use. That is a production request, made once, that costs nothing if you ask at the start.

STEP 03

What the studio needs from you first

A massing study is only as honest as the survey under it. Most delays on land visuals are not modelling time — they are waiting for the levels. Gather this before you approach anyone.

SITE AND BOUNDARIES

- [ ] Title plan with the boundary you are actually selling
- [ ] Topographic survey, with the date it was taken
- [ ] Spot levels or contours, and the datum they refer to
- [ ] Any easements, wayleaves or rights of way
- [ ] Trees: positions, and any that are protected
- [ ] Known services and where they enter

CONTEXT AND ACCESS

- [ ] Access point, and the road it comes off
- [ ] Neighbouring building heights, from survey or open data
- [ ] Recent aerial imagery, with its date
- [ ] Photographs from the road and from each boundary
- [ ] North point, confirmed — not assumed from a plan
- [ ] Any consented neighbouring scheme you know of

Your assumptions, written down with the images

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MASSING OPTION ____   Footprint ________ m2   Storeys ____
  Indicative floor area ________ m2
  Set-backs assumed  front ____  side ____  rear ____
  Height assumed ________  Source of that assumption _____________
  Access assumed from ____________________________________
  Survey used _____________________  dated __________
  Context heights from ___________________________________
  Prepared by _____________________  date __________
  Approved wording on image: ____________________________
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Publish this alongside the images. A buyer who can see your assumptions can test them against their own, which moves the conversation forward. A buyer who cannot see them assumes the worst, or discounts the images entirely — and in a land sale those are the same outcome.

The two views worth paying for above all others

An accurate aerial that shows the plot in its context with the boundary drawn on it, and one eye-level view from the access point looking in. Between them they answer most of what a serious land buyer wants before they will get on a plane. Everything else is useful. Those two are the minimum.

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

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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.

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SEE THE WORK

maverickframe.com/gallery

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