



FIELD GUIDE / 2026 EDITION

Pick the **Camera**, Not the Picture

The standard architectural views and what each one is actually for, the height and lens that suit each, and a camera schedule you attach to the brief.

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Most briefs describe a mood and stop

“Warm, inviting, aspirational, late afternoon.” All useful, and none of it says where the camera stands. So the studio decides — reasonably, and often well — and then two rounds are spent moving a camera that could have been agreed in one line before anyone started.

This is not an argument for longer briefs. A brief should stay short. It is an argument for spending three of its lines on the one variable that changes the image more than any other.

The camera fixes the subject

Where it stands decides what the image is about: the building, the approach to it, the room, or the junction of two materials. Everything else in the brief describes how that subject is treated.

The camera fixes the scale

Height and lens together decide whether a building reads as monumental, domestic or squat. Two images of the same house from the same spot at different heights are two different buildings.

And it fixes the cost

A camera choice determines how much of the surroundings has to exist. A wide aerial means modelling neighbours, streets and horizon. A tight detail means modelling almost nothing, in great depth.

This guide is about how the camera is set, not which rooms to shoot. If you have not yet decided what the set of images covers, do that first — then come back and specify each one here.

STEP 01

The standard views, and what each is for

Heights and lenses below are the working ranges these views usually sit in, not rules. Name the view in the brief and let the studio place it precisely.

VIEW	TYPICAL HEIGHT & LENS	WHAT IT IS FOR, AND WHEN IT FAILS
Eye level	About 1.5–1.7 m. Moderate wide to normal.	The default, and the honest one — it shows what a person standing there would see. Fails when the site is cramped and half the building falls outside the frame.
Elevated	Roughly first-floor to a few storeys. Normal to moderate wide.	Reveals the plan — how the building sits on the plot, how the landscape works. The workhorse for masterplans and for houses with a garden that matters.
Aerial	High. Normal to longer.	Context, massing and relationship to the surroundings. Fails when chosen by default: it shows everything and makes the reader feel nothing, and it costs the most to build.
Worm's eye / low	Below eye level, sometimes at ground.	Drama, verticality, a canopy or soffit read from beneath. Use sparingly and on purpose. Two in a set of eight is a style; five is a mannerism.
One-point	Camera square to the main surface, at eye level.	Calm, formal, graphic. Strong for corridors, symmetrical facades and framed views. Reads as flat if the subject is not genuinely symmetrical.
Two-point	Angled to a corner, verticals kept parallel.	The standard architectural view. Shows two faces and depth at once. Most exterior images and most interiors are this.
Detail	Close, often longer lens, shallow depth.	Material, junction, craftsmanship. The cheapest image in a set to produce well and the one most often left out.
Orthographic elevation	No perspective at all.	Not a photograph — a measured view. For comparing options, showing a facade honestly and putting images next to drawings. Ask for it by name; it is rarely offered.

STEP 02

Verticals, and the four mistakes that repeat

Keep the verticals parallel — unless you decide otherwise

Point a camera up at a building and its vertical lines converge. The eye reads that as the building leaning backwards. Architectural photographers correct for it with a shift lens; in CGI it is a setting, and it costs nothing. The convention is that verticals stay parallel — it is why architectural images look composed rather than snapped. Break it deliberately for a low dramatic view, never by accident, and put the instruction in the brief so it is a choice rather than a default.

01 Too wide, to fit everything in

The most common fault in exterior CGI. A very wide lens on a tight site pushes the building away, stretches whatever sits at the edges and makes the foreground enormous. If it will not fit, move the camera or change the view — do not widen the lens. A cramped honest image is better than a distorted complete one.

02 Drone height for no reason

Aerials became easy, so they became automatic. Ask what the height is doing. If the answer is that it shows the whole scheme, that is a masterplan drawing, not a selling image. Nobody will ever stand there, and an image from a position no human occupies is hard to feel anything about.

03 The camera inside a wall

Interiors are routinely shot from a position that is physically inside the wall, or even outside the building, because the room is too small for the view somebody wanted. It produces a room that cannot be recognised on site. If a room genuinely cannot be shown in one frame, shoot it in two.

04 Eight images from the same height

A set where every camera sits at 1.6 m reads as flat, however good each image is. Vary height, distance and lens across the set deliberately — one elevated, most at eye level, one or two close. The schedule overleaf makes that visible at a glance, which is most of why it is worth filling in.

A fifth, quieter one: **the camera that never moves between variants**. If you are showing options, material choices or phases, lock the camera and change only the thing being compared. A moving camera makes two options impossible to compare, which is the entire purpose of showing them.

STEP 03

The camera schedule

One row per image. Attach it to the brief. It is shorter than the paragraph you would otherwise write, and it is the difference between agreeing cameras before work starts and moving them afterwards.

PROJECT _____ SET OF _____ IMAGES

#	VIEW TYPE	FROM / TOWARDS	HEIGHT	NOTE
1	_____	_____	_____	_____
2	_____	_____	_____	_____
3	_____	_____	_____	_____
4	_____	_____	_____	_____
5	_____	_____	_____	_____
6	_____	_____	_____	_____

VIEW TYPE eye level / elevated / aerial / low / one-point /
two-point / detail / orthographic elevation

ACROSS THE WHOLE SET

Verticals parallel? _____ Exceptions, and why _____

Widest lens acceptable _____

Aspect ratio and orientation _____

Cameras locked across variants? _____

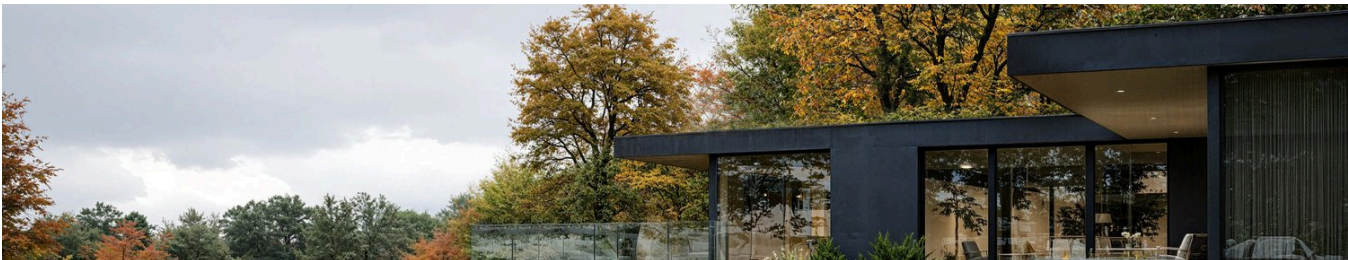
Any camera that must be documentable? _____
(surveyed position, lens, height, date and time recorded)

The last line, briefly

If any image may end up in front of a planning authority or a hearing, its camera has to be placeable on a map and reproducible. That is a different specification from a marketing view and it cannot be added afterwards. Ask your authority or adviser what they require, then mark those rows here at the start.

Fill in the column you know

You do not need all four columns. View type and rough direction are enough for most sets — the height and the lens are the studio's job. The schedule works because it makes the shape of the set visible, not because it removes the judgement.



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



MAVERICK
FRAME
STUDIO

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.

