



DESIGN STUDIO

ARCHITECTURAL RENDERING

PROJECT STARTER KIT

A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO PLANNING
BETTER RENDERINGS BEFORE
THE PROJECT BEGINS

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Architectural Rendering Project Starter Kit

A Practical Guide to Planning Better Renderings Before the Project Begins

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How to Use This Starter Kit

This guide is designed to help you prepare for an architectural rendering project before production begins.

You do not need every answer finalized before reaching out. Many projects begin while drawings, materials, interiors, landscaping, or marketing details are still developing. The goal is to organize what is known, identify what is still open, and give RM Design Studio a clear starting point.

Recommended Use

Step	What to Do	Why It Helps
1	Read the planning sections first	Understand what affects rendering scope, schedule, and presentation quality
2	Review the view selection guide	Decide which images are actually worth producing
3	Gather available files and references	Reduce back-and-forth and avoid missing information
4	Fill in the brief template	Give the rendering team a clear project starting point
5	Send the completed kit to RM Design Studio	Help clarify scope, views, timeline, and next steps

Best practice: The strongest rendering requests are not always the most detailed. They are the clearest.

Use the first half of this guide to think through your **project goals**, **view options**, **timeline**, and the **details that may affect the rendering process**. Then use the second half, starting on **page 23**, as a practical **brief and checklist** before contacting **RM Design Studio**.

And if you are not sure where to start, just give us a call or email us at info@rmdesignstudio.com. We always enjoy **brainstorming ideas**, talking through **project challenges**, and helping clients find the **right path forward**.

01. Before the Checklist: Why Preparation Matters

Requesting architectural renderings can sound simple at first.

Send the drawings, choose a few views, wait for the images.

In real project workflows, it is usually more layered than that.

A rendering team needs to understand more than the shape of the building. They need to understand **what the images are supposed to accomplish, who will be looking at them, what stage the design is in, what information is already decided, what may still change, and how the final visuals will be used.**

A rendering prepared for a city meeting may need to be clear, accurate, and easy to understand. A rendering for a leasing campaign may need to feel warm, active, and marketable. A rendering for an investor deck may need to support the overall story of the project, not just show the architecture.

The same building can require very different images depending on the goal.

That is why preparation matters.

A clear rendering brief helps reduce guesswork. It helps the visualization team understand the project faster, choose better camera angles, avoid avoidable revisions, and create images that support the purpose of the presentation.

This starter kit was created to help **developers, architects, interior designers, real estate marketing teams, leasing teams, project managers, and ownership groups** organize the right information before starting a rendering project.

You do not need to have every detail finalized before contacting RM Design Studio. Many projects begin while some decisions are still in progress.

The goal is not perfection.

The goal is clarity.

By the End of This Guide, You Should Understand

You Will Learn	Why It Matters
What information a rendering studio needs	Helps the project start with fewer assumptions
Which views are useful for different project goals	Helps avoid producing images that do not support the presentation
What files and references are helpful	Saves time during setup and production
What can affect cost and schedule	Creates a more realistic scope conversation
How to reduce unnecessary back-and-forth	Keeps review rounds more organized
How to prepare a stronger request for a quote	Gives RM Design Studio a clearer project picture

02. What This Starter Kit Helps You Avoid

A rendering project can still move forward when some details are missing. The bigger issue is when missing information is not identified early.

This starter kit helps reduce the most common issues that slow projects down.

Common Issue	What Can Happen	How This Guide Helps
Unclear scope	Pricing and scheduling become harder to define	Organizes project type, views, purpose, and deadlines
Missing files	The rendering team has to make assumptions	Lists helpful drawings, models, references, and notes
Wrong view selections	Images may look good but fail to support the project goal	Helps match views to audience and use case
Conflicting feedback	Review rounds become slower and less focused	Encourages one main contact and consolidated comments
Late material changes	Previously completed work may need to be revised	Helps separate confirmed items from placeholders
Unrealistic review timelines	Final delivery can become rushed	Encourages planning around draft review and revisions
Extra back-and-forth	More time is spent clarifying basics	Gives RM Design Studio a clearer starting point
Presentation mismatch	The image may not fit the deck, website, board, or brochure	Encourages early discussion of final use and format

RM Design Studio Tip

A rendering should not only look polished. It should support the purpose of the project, the audience, and the decision being made.

03. What Makes a Rendering Project Successful?

A successful rendering project usually starts before the first image is produced.

The final result depends on more than software, lighting, materials, or camera angles. Those are important, but they come after the project direction is understood.

The strongest rendering projects usually have a few things in common.

1. The Purpose Is Clear

Before choosing views, it helps to understand what the images need to do.

Are they meant to explain the design to a planning board? Support a zoning or entitlement conversation? Help investors understand the project? Pre-lease units? Market a new development? Present interior design direction to ownership?

Each purpose changes how the image should be composed.

Rendering Purpose	What the Image Needs to Do
City meeting or public presentation	Show context, scale, massing, materials, and streetscape clearly
Investor or ownership deck	Communicate quality, positioning, and the overall project story
Leasing or sales campaign	Help viewers imagine the finished experience
Website or brochure	Create a strong first impression and support the brand
Internal design review	Help compare options, study details, or make decisions

When the purpose is clear, the rendering team can make better decisions about **camera angle, lighting, level of detail, entourage, and overall tone**.

2. The Audience Is Understood

Different audiences look at renderings differently.

Audience	What They Usually Need to Understand
Architects	Proportions, materials, layout, design accuracy
Developers	Marketability, value, positioning, stakeholder response
City officials	Context, massing, streetscape, public impact
Leasing teams	Experience, lifestyle, amenities, emotional appeal
Investors	Quality, scale, project story, overall opportunity
Interior designers	Finish direction, mood, furniture, lighting, material quality

A rendering does not need to say everything to everyone.

It needs to communicate the right thing to the right audience.

3. The Right Views Are Chosen

A common mistake is choosing views too quickly.

Sometimes the most obvious view is not the most useful one. A straight-on exterior may show the elevation clearly, but a corner view may better communicate depth, entry experience, retail presence, or streetscape character.

For interiors, a wide room view may show layout, while a tighter detail view may better communicate finish quality.

Best Practice

The best view is not always the prettiest view. It is the view that supports the purpose of the image.

4. The Source Information Is Organized

Rendering teams can work from many types of files, including CAD, Revit, SketchUp, Rhino, PDFs, sketches, references, finish boards, and site photos. The important part is knowing what is current and what should be trusted.

If drawings are outdated, if materials are not selected, or if a model does not match the latest design, the rendering team needs to know that early. Clear source information helps the process move faster and reduces avoidable rework.

5. The Design Intent Is Communicated

Drawings show dimensions and layout. They do not always explain the feeling of the project.

That is where design intent matters.

Should the project feel refined and quiet? Warm and residential? Urban and active? Hospitality-inspired? High-end and polished? Clean and understated?

Even simple reference images can help communicate this direction. They do not need to match the project exactly. They only need to help explain the desired **mood, materials, lighting, or level of activity**.

6. The Review Process Is Controlled

Rendering revisions are normal. The issue is not that feedback happens. The issue is when feedback is scattered, conflicting, or late.

A smoother process usually has:

- ☐ One main point of contact
- ☐ Consolidated comments
- ☐ Clear markups
- ☐ An understanding of who has final approval
- ☐ A timeline for review and revisions
- ☐ Early communication about design changes

Good feedback saves time. Unorganized feedback creates extra rounds.

04. Common Information Gaps That Slow Rendering Projects Down

Many delays in rendering projects come from missing information that nobody realized was important at the beginning.

These gaps are normal, especially when a project is still moving through design, approvals, or marketing planning. The goal is not to have everything solved before starting. The goal is to identify what is known, what is undecided, and what needs guidance.

Common Gap	Why It Matters
Final use is unclear	A website image, city board image, and investor deck image may need different compositions
View list is too general	“Three exteriors” does not explain which views matter most
Materials are not fully decided	The team needs to know what is confirmed and what is still a placeholder
Too many reviewers respond separately	Feedback can become conflicting or repetitive
Deadline only reflects the final meeting date	Review time, revisions, and final polish also need to be planned
Project stage is not communicated	Concept-stage visuals and final marketing visuals require different expectations

The Final Use of the Renderings Is Unclear

A rendering for a website hero image is not always composed the same way as a rendering for a city board package.

A website image may need open space for text, a wider crop, or a stronger marketing feel. A planning image may need a more neutral, accurate, context-heavy composition.

When the final use is unclear, the rendering may look good but not fit the actual presentation need.

The View List Is Too General

Requests like “we need three exteriors” or “we need a few interiors” are a starting point, but they usually need more definition.

Useful questions include:

- ☐ Which exterior matters most?
- ☐ Is the main entrance important?
- ☐ Does the corner condition matter?
- ☐ Does the streetscape need to be shown?
- ☐ Is there a key amenity courtyard?
- ☐ Is retail frontage part of the story?
- ☐ Which interiors matter most?
- ☐ Lobby, clubroom, leasing office, model unit, kitchen, amenity lounge?

A more specific view strategy helps avoid producing images that look nice but do not support the project’s real priorities.

Materials Are Not Fully Decided

Material uncertainty is common.

The issue is not that materials may change. The issue is when the rendering team does not know which materials are confirmed and which are placeholders.

If brick color, metal panel finish, flooring, millwork, furniture, lighting fixtures, cabinet finish, countertops, or hardware are still being reviewed, that should be communicated early.

Good to Know

“Not final yet” is useful information. It tells the rendering team where to avoid overcommitting too early.

Too Many People Are Giving Feedback Separately

Multiple stakeholders are normal. Developers, architects, interior designers, leasing teams, ownership groups, and marketing teams may all need input.

But if feedback comes from everyone separately, comments can conflict.

A single consolidated feedback list is much easier to manage.

The Deadline Is Based Only on the Final Meeting Date

A final presentation date is important, but the rendering schedule should also account for review time.

If the meeting is on Friday, the final images should not be planned for Friday morning. The team may need time for draft review, comments, revisions, final polish, and file preparation.

A good timeline works backward from the presentation date and leaves room for decisions.

The Project Stage Is Not Communicated

A concept-stage project should not be treated the same way as a fully developed marketing package.

Early-stage renderings may need flexibility. Final marketing renderings usually need more detail and polish.

When the rendering team understands the project stage, they can better match the process, level of detail, and expectations.

05. How to Think About Renderings Before Requesting a Quote

A rendering is not just a picture of the project.

It is a communication tool.

It may need to explain the design, support a presentation, show a future experience, help a team make decisions, or give a marketing team the images they need to promote the project.

Use the questions below before asking for pricing.

Key Planning Questions

Question	Why It Matters
What does this image need to accomplish?	Helps define the purpose of each rendering
Who is the image for?	Helps adjust clarity, tone, detail, and composition
Where will the image be used?	Helps plan format, crop, and orientation
What is still undecided?	Helps separate confirmed details from placeholders
What is the most important view?	Helps prioritize budget and production effort
What deadline is driving the project?	Helps plan review time and final delivery needs

What Does This Image Need to Accomplish?

The answer may be different for each view.

One image may need to explain the building’s relationship to the street. Another may need to show the quality of the lobby. Another may need to communicate the feeling of an amenity space. Another may need to support a leasing campaign.

When every image has a purpose, the rendering package becomes more focused.

Who Is the Image For?

A planning board, investor, ownership group, leasing team, buyer, tenant, architect, and interior designer may all care about different things.

For technical or approval-focused audiences, clarity may matter most.

For marketing audiences, atmosphere and emotional appeal may matter more.

For internal design reviews, the image may need to help compare options or identify unresolved decisions.

Where Will the Image Be Used?

A rendering used in a wide website banner may need a different composition than a rendering used in a vertical brochure, square social post, investor deck, or presentation board.

If you already know where the images will appear, share that early.

This can affect camera angle, crop, image orientation, level of detail, and how much open space should be left around the subject.

What Is Still Undecided?

It is completely normal for a project to have open decisions.

The important part is to identify them.

If materials, furniture, signage, lighting, landscaping, or finishes are not final, note that clearly. The rendering team can still help move the project forward, but they need to know which items are confirmed and which are placeholders.

06. Rendering Project Timeline Overview

Every project is different, but most rendering projects follow a similar general sequence.

This timeline is not a promise of exact timing. It is meant to help you understand the typical workflow and where your input may be needed.

Stage	What Happens	Client Input Needed
1. Project Review	RM Design Studio reviews the project information, files, goals, and deadlines	Send available drawings, models, references, and notes
2. Scope Clarification	Views, deliverables, timeline, and level of detail are discussed	Confirm purpose, number of views, and presentation needs
3. File Collection	Drawings, models, materials, site references, and design direction are gathered	Provide current files and clarify what should be trusted
4. Camera / View Planning	Initial view direction is discussed or selected	Confirm the most important views and final image use
5. Draft Production	Draft renderings are prepared for review	Review draft images carefully
6. Review and Feedback	Comments are collected and organized	Send consolidated comments and clear markups
7. Revisions	Adjustments are made based on agreed feedback	Clarify must-change items vs preferences
8. Final Delivery	Final images are polished and delivered	Confirm final file needs and formats

Before You Send Files

If there are multiple versions of drawings or models, identify which version is current. This small step can prevent avoidable confusion.

07. What to Expect for Interior Rendering Projects

Interior renderings usually require a different level of detail than exterior renderings.

With an exterior image, the main focus may be the building form, facade materials, site context, landscaping, lighting, and surrounding environment.

With interiors, the rendering team often needs more information about finishes, fixtures, furniture, lighting, and room-by-room selections.

This is because interior images are built from many smaller decisions. Wall color, flooring, baseboards, cabinet style, countertop material, backsplash, appliances, faucets, door hardware, lighting fixtures, and furniture direction can all affect the final image.

Interior-Only Note

RM Design Studio may provide or request an **interior-specific checklist after onboarding** for interior rendering projects.

This checklist applies to **interior rendering projects only**.

It should not be understood as a requirement for every project.

Exterior-only projects usually require different information, such as site plans, elevations, exterior materials, landscape direction, lighting direction, entourage, site context, parking, streetscape, and camera preferences.

Interior Details That May Be Requested

Interior Category	Examples
Walls and paint	Wall colors, room-by-room paint selections, accent walls
Trim and molding	Baseboards, baseboard height, crown molding, casing direction
Windows and doors	Window casing, interior door style, door finish
Hardware	Door handles, cabinet pulls, hardware finish
Flooring	Flooring type by room, carpet, tile, wood, luxury vinyl, transitions
Stairs and railings	Tread material, risers, railing style, railing finish
Kitchen details	Cabinet style, cabinet finish, countertop, backsplash, appliances
Plumbing fixtures	Sink style, faucet style, finish selections
Bathroom details	Vanity cabinet style, vanity top, backsplash, faucet, mirror direction
Lighting	Fixture style, finish, lighting plans, reflected ceiling plans
Furniture and decor	Furniture references, artwork, accessories, window treatments
Electrical information	Electrical or lighting plans when available

Why This Matters

Interior renderings can look incomplete or inaccurate when these decisions are missing.

For example:

Interior Space	Information That May Matter
Kitchen	Cabinet style, countertop, backsplash, appliances, faucet, sink, cabinet pulls, flooring, lighting
Bathroom	Vanity finish, counter profile, faucet finish, mirror style, backsplash height, fixtures, lighting
Living area	Flooring, wall color, trim, furniture style, lighting, window treatments, artwork, mood direction
Lobby	Flooring, wall treatment, reception desk, seating, lighting, signage, artwork, material quality
Amenity space	Furniture, layout, lighting, activity level, decor, finishes, brand tone

Even when some selections are not final, it helps to identify what is confirmed and what is still flexible.

What If You Do Not Have Every Interior Selection Yet?

That is normal.

Many projects begin before every finish, fixture, or furniture decision is finalized. The important part is to communicate what is known, what is undecided, and where RM Design Studio should use references or placeholder direction.

A helpful interior package may include:

- ☐ Finish schedules
- ☐ Material boards
- ☐ Furniture references
- ☐ Cabinet drawings
- ☐ Appliance selections
- ☐ Plumbing fixture selections
- ☐ Lighting references
- ☐ Interior elevations
- ☐ Reflected ceiling plans
- ☐ Inspiration images
- ☐ Notes from the design team

08. Rendering View Selection Guide

Choosing the right views is one of the most important decisions in a rendering project.

Not every project needs every type of image. The best views are the ones that help the audience understand the project, the design value, and the intended experience.

View Selection Summary

View Type	Best For	Useful When
Exterior Front View	Main marketing image, website hero, city presentation	The entrance, facade, or curb appeal matters
Exterior Corner View	Urban, mixed-use, multifamily, retail frontage	The building has important visibility from multiple sides
Streetscape View	City review, public presentation, neighborhood context	Context, sidewalks, pedestrian scale, and public impact matter
Aerial View	Large developments, master plans, investor decks	Site layout, circulation, parking, and scale need to be understood
Dusk or Evening Exterior	Marketing, hospitality, multifamily, retail	Lighting, signage, and atmosphere add value
Lobby View	Multifamily, office, hospitality, leasing	The arrival experience supports the project value
Amenity Space View	Leasing, lifestyle marketing, hospitality	The experience of using the space matters
Interior Unit or Model Room	Residential, multifamily, hospitality	Interior quality and finished experience matter
Kitchen or Living Detail	Sales, leasing, interior design	Finish quality needs to be highlighted
Outdoor Amenity View	Pool, courtyard, rooftop, plaza	Lifestyle and outdoor experience are important
Leasing or Sales Office	Leasing teams, branded environments	Customer-facing experience matters

View Type	Best For	Useful When
Detail or Feature Shot	Materials, signage, custom design elements	A specific design feature deserves attention
Lifestyle View	Marketing, brochures, web, social	The image needs to feel active and relatable
Presentation-Focused View	City meetings, investor decks, ownership reviews	The image needs to support a decision clearly

Exterior Front View

A front exterior view is often used as a main project image.

It can work well for websites, brochures, city presentations, investor decks, and project introductions.

Best for: Main marketing image, website hero image, city presentations, investor decks, brochures, project introductions.

Exterior Corner View

A corner view can feel more dynamic than a straight-on elevation.

It can show depth, building massing, multiple facades, storefronts, balconies, entries, and pedestrian activity.

Best for: Urban projects, mixed-use buildings, retail frontage, multifamily developments, and streetscape-focused presentations.

Streetscape View

A streetscape view shows how the project relates to its surroundings.

It can communicate sidewalks, landscape areas, pedestrian movement, storefront activity, building setbacks, and neighborhood context.

Best for: City review, neighborhood context, planning meetings, pedestrian experience, and public presentations.

Aerial View

An aerial view helps explain the full project layout.

It can show building placement, parking, circulation, amenity areas, surrounding roads, landscape areas, and site organization.

Best for: Large developments, master plans, phased projects, site planning, ownership reviews, and investor presentations.

Dusk or Evening Exterior

A dusk rendering can make a project feel polished and memorable.

It is especially useful when lighting, signage, warm interiors, or evening activity are part of the project's appeal.

Best for: Marketing campaigns, hospitality, multifamily, retail, restaurants, and luxury presentation visuals.

Lobby View

A lobby view helps communicate the first impression of a building.

It can show quality of finishes, scale, lighting, seating, reception areas, and the tone of the arrival experience.

Best for: Multifamily, office, hospitality, senior living, leasing materials, and investor decks.

Amenity Space View

Amenity views help potential residents, tenants, or stakeholders understand how the space will be used.

Examples include clubrooms, lounges, gyms, coworking spaces, pools, courtyards, rooftops, game rooms, and outdoor gathering areas.

Best for: Multifamily leasing, student housing, senior living, hospitality, and lifestyle marketing.

Interior Unit or Model Room View

Interior views help communicate scale, finishes, light, furniture layout, and the overall feel of a space.

Best for: Multifamily leasing, residential sales, interior design presentations, hospitality suites, and model unit marketing.

Kitchen or Living Detail View

A detail-focused interior view can highlight finishes, cabinetry, countertops, fixtures, lighting, and material quality.

Sometimes this type of image communicates the value of the space better than a wide room view.

Best for: Residential marketing, apartment leasing, interior design, and sales presentations.

Pool, Courtyard, or Outdoor Amenity View

Outdoor amenity images help show how people will experience the property.

These views often work well when they include landscaping, seating, lighting, and a realistic level of activity.

Best for: Lifestyle marketing, leasing campaigns, hospitality, residential communities, and amenity-focused developments.

Leasing or Sales Office View

A leasing or sales office rendering can help teams plan the customer experience before the space is built.

It can also support pre-leasing campaigns or internal approvals.

Best for: Leasing teams, sales centers, branded marketing environments, and customer-facing interior spaces.

Detail or Feature Shot

Detail shots are helpful when a specific design feature deserves attention.

This could include a canopy, monument sign, reception desk, fireplace, bar area, custom ceiling, architectural screen, landscape feature, or branded element.

Best for: Materials, signage, entry moments, custom design features, branded areas, and brochure imagery.

Lifestyle View

A lifestyle view focuses less on documenting the building and more on showing how the space feels when used.

It may include people, activity, soft lighting, furniture, landscaping, or seasonal context.

Best for: Marketing, leasing, websites, brochures, social media, and emotional positioning.

Presentation-Focused View

A presentation-focused view is selected specifically to support a decision or discussion.

It should be clear, easy to read, and aligned with the purpose of the presentation.

Best for: City meetings, investor decks, ownership presentations, public meetings, and internal approvals.

09. Before You Request a Rendering: What to Prepare

You do not need to have a perfect package before contacting a rendering studio.

Still, the right information helps the studio understand the scope faster and give better guidance.

Preparation Checklist

Drawing and Model Files

- ☐ CAD files
- ☐ Revit model
- ☐ SketchUp model
- ☐ Rhino model
- ☐ 3ds Max model
- ☐ PDF floor plans
- ☐ PDF elevations
- ☐ PDF sections
- ☐ Roof plan
- ☐ Site plan
- ☐ Landscape plan
- ☐ Reflected ceiling plan
- ☐ Interior elevations
- ☐ Finish plans
- ☐ Furniture plans
- ☐ Signage drawings
- ☐ Lighting plans
- ☐ Other drawings that explain the project

Before You Send Files

If you are not sure which files are useful, send what you have and note which ones are current.

Project Information

- ☐ Project name
- ☐ Project location
- ☐ Project type
- ☐ Current design stage
- ☐ Intended use for the renderings
- ☐ Target audience
- ☐ Number of views needed
- ☐ Required deadline
- ☐ Presentation date, if applicable
- ☐ Main decision-maker
- ☐ Main point of contact

Design Direction

- ☐ Material selections
- ☐ Finish boards
- ☐ Furniture references
- ☐ Lighting references
- ☐ Landscape references
- ☐ Interior design concept
- ☐ Exterior design intent
- ☐ Color palette
- ☐ Signage or branding direction
- ☐ Comparable projects
- ☐ Inspiration images
- ☐ Previous renderings, if available

Camera and View Preferences

- ☐ Main exterior view
- ☐ Secondary exterior view
- ☐ Aerial view
- ☐ Streetscape view
- ☐ Entry view
- ☐ Lobby view
- ☐ Amenity view
- ☐ Interior unit view
- ☐ Detail view
- ☐ Dusk view
- ☐ Marketing hero image
- ☐ Presentation image

- ☐ Social media crop
- ☐ Website banner crop

If you do not know the best views yet, explain the purpose of the renderings. RM Design Studio can help guide the view selection.

Marketing and Branding Requirements

- ☐ Logo files
- ☐ Brand colors
- ☐ Fonts
- ☐ Signage direction
- ☐ Website image size needs
- ☐ Brochure image needs
- ☐ Investor deck format
- ☐ Social media aspect ratios
- ☐ Leasing or sales messaging
- ☐ Required disclaimers
- ☐ Project naming or branding direction

Review Process

- ☐ Who will review the renderings?
- ☐ Who gives final approval?
- ☐ How many people need to provide feedback?
- ☐ Will comments be consolidated by one person?
- ☐ Are there city, ownership, or investor deadlines?
- ☐ Are design decisions still pending?
- ☐ Are there known items that may change during the process?

10. Feedback Best Practices

A clear feedback process can make a major difference in the flow of a rendering project.

Revisions are normal. What matters most is whether comments are clear, organized, and actionable.

How to Reduce Revision Confusion

Best Practice	Why It Helps
Use one main contact	Keeps communication organized
Consolidate comments	Reduces conflicting feedback
Mark up images clearly	Shows exactly what needs attention
Separate design changes from rendering adjustments	Helps clarify scope and production impact
Identify must-change items vs preferences	Helps prioritize revisions
Communicate deadline-sensitive revisions early	Helps protect the final delivery schedule
Confirm final decision-maker	Avoids late-stage approval confusion

Helpful Feedback Examples

Less Helpful	More Helpful
"Make it better"	"Please make the lobby lighting warmer and reduce the brightness near the reception desk."
"The exterior feels off"	"The brick should be darker, the window frames should match the latest elevation, and the landscaping should be less dense."
"Try another angle"	"Can we test a slightly lower camera angle that shows more of the main entrance canopy?"
"Too many people"	"Please reduce the number of pedestrians near the entry and keep the focus on the architecture."

11. Developer's Guide to Better Presentation Renderings

Renderings are often used to support decisions.

For developers and ownership groups, the most useful images are not always the most dramatic ones. The strongest presentation renderings are the ones that help the audience understand the project quickly and clearly.

A good rendering should answer the right question for the right audience.

Presentation Use Guide

Use Case	What the Rendering Should Support	Helpful Views
City meetings and public presentations	Clarity, context, scale, massing, materials, public impact	Exterior front, corner, streetscape, aerial, entry
Investor or ownership presentations	Quality, positioning, scale, project story, opportunity	Hero exterior, aerial, lobby, amenities, lifestyle
Leasing and sales	Experience, warmth, finishes, lifestyle, usability	Lobby, amenities, model unit, kitchen, courtyard, rooftop
Websites and brochures	First impression, brand support, flexible marketing use	Exterior hero, amenities, interiors, details, social crops
Internal decision making	Compare options, study materials, review layouts	Study views, material comparisons, interior layouts

For City Meetings and Public Presentations

City officials, planning boards, and public audiences often need clarity more than drama.

Useful rendering goals include showing how the project fits the site, communicating height and massing clearly, explaining the streetscape experience, showing pedestrian areas and access points, representing materials accurately, and avoiding unnecessary visual distractions.

Recommended views may include exterior front view, corner view, streetscape view, aerial site view, entry view, daylight exterior, and context-focused views.

The best approach is to use images that feel realistic, readable, and grounded.

Avoid making the project look overly stylized if the audience needs to understand scale, context, and design intent.

For Investor or Ownership Presentations

Investors and ownership groups usually need to understand both the project vision and the business case behind the visuals.

Useful rendering goals include communicating quality, showing the market positioning, clarifying the project experience, supporting the story of the development, and making the opportunity easier to understand.

Recommended views may include hero exterior, aerial view, lobby, amenity spaces, key interiors, lifestyle views, and branded marketing visuals.

The best approach is to choose images that support the project's value. The visuals should make the development feel organized, intentional, and presentation-ready.

For Leasing and Sales Teams

Leasing and sales teams need images that help people imagine the finished space.

Useful rendering goals include showing the experience of arriving, living, working, visiting, or using the space.

The images should highlight the features that will matter most to prospective tenants, buyers, residents, or guests.

Recommended views may include lobby, amenity spaces, model unit, kitchen/living area, pool, courtyard, clubhouse, rooftop, leasing office, and lifestyle views.

The best approach is to focus on warmth, usability, material quality, furniture, lighting, and the feeling of the space.

For Websites and Brochures

Marketing materials need images that are clear, polished, and flexible.

Useful rendering goals include creating strong first impressions, supporting project branding, communicating the project type quickly, and providing visuals that can work across multiple layouts.

Recommended views may include website hero image, exterior hero view, amenity views, interior views, detail shots, and social-media-friendly crops.

Think about image format early. A rendering for a wide website banner may need a different composition than a rendering for a brochure cover or square social media post.

For Internal Decision Making

Not every rendering needs to be a final marketing image.

Some visuals are useful because they help teams make decisions.

Useful rendering goals include comparing materials, reviewing massing, studying lighting, testing furniture layouts, understanding scale, or aligning ownership and design teams.

Recommended views may include simple exterior studies, interior layout views, material comparison views, amenity planning views, and detail studies.

Be clear about whether the image is for design study or final presentation. This helps the rendering team match the level of detail and polish to the actual need.

12. Rendering Cost Factors Guide

Rendering costs can vary because every project has a different level of information, complexity, detail, and urgency.

This section explains the most common factors that affect scope, time, and pricing. It is meant to help you understand what a rendering studio may need to consider when reviewing your project.

Cost Factor Summary

Cost Factor	What Can Affect Scope
Number of views	More final images require more setup, review, rendering, and post-production
Project complexity	Complex geometry, large sites, detailed facades, custom interiors
Available files	Clean 3D models may reduce setup time, while partial files may require more modeling
Modeling needs	Buildings, site context, interiors, furniture, landscape, signage, surrounding context
Interior vs exterior	Each has different detail requirements
Level of detail	Early studies and final marketing images require different production effort
Revisions	Organized feedback helps control review rounds
Deadline urgency	Compressed timelines may require priority scheduling
Custom styling	Specific art direction, brand direction, or visual mood can affect effort
Entourage and activity	People, vehicles, furniture, landscaping, and activity need thoughtful placement
Landscape and site context	Simple planting differs from detailed courtyards, rooftops, and streetscapes
Animation or video	Motion work is a separate scope from still renderings

Number of Views

Each final image requires camera setup, composition, modeling review, material work, lighting, rendering, and post-production.

A project with one exterior view is very different from a package that includes multiple exterior views, interiors, aerials, amenity spaces, and detail shots.

More views usually require more coordination, but some efficiencies may be possible when views share the same model, materials, or setting.

Project Complexity

Simple buildings with straightforward geometry are usually less time-intensive than large developments with complex massing, detailed facades, multiple buildings, custom interiors, or highly specific site conditions.

Factors that add complexity may include detailed facade systems, custom architectural features, large sites, multiple buildings, complex rooflines, structured parking, detailed interiors, unique furniture, custom lighting, signage, landscaping, and surrounding context.

Available Files

The quality and completeness of the starting files can affect the amount of setup needed.

A clean 3D model with organized drawings may reduce modeling time. A project with only PDFs, partial drawings, or early concept sketches may require more interpretation and model-building before rendering can begin.

Helpful files include Revit models, SketchUp models, Rhino models, CAD files, PDFs, elevations, floor plans, sections, site plans, landscape plans, material references, and finish schedules.

Modeling Needs

Some projects require only cleanup and preparation of an existing model. Others require significant modeling from drawings.

Modeling needs may include building geometry, site context, topography, landscape elements, interior architecture, furniture, fixtures, lighting, signage, neighboring buildings, parking areas, streets, sidewalks, and custom details.

Interior vs. Exterior Renderings

Interior renderings often require detailed attention to furniture, finishes, lighting, accessories, ceiling design, wall treatments, artwork, and styling.

Exterior renderings often require attention to architecture, site context, landscaping, roads, parking, lighting, materials, surrounding buildings, and atmosphere.

Neither is automatically simpler. The scope depends on the level of detail and the information available.

Level of Detail

Some images are intended for early design review. Others need to be polished for marketing, leasing, or investor presentations.

Higher-detail images may involve more refined materials, carefully selected entourage, detailed landscape, custom furniture, realistic lighting, and additional post-production.

Be clear about how the images will be used so the level of detail matches the purpose.

Revisions and Review Rounds

Most rendering projects include a review process. Cost and schedule can be affected by how many revision rounds are needed and how organized the feedback is.

The most efficient review process usually includes consolidated comments, one main decision-maker, clear markups, timely feedback, and early communication about design changes.

Large design changes late in the process can affect scope, especially if they require remodeling, re-lighting, or reworking camera compositions.

Deadline Urgency

Rush timelines may affect cost if the project requires extended hours, priority scheduling, or a compressed production process.

If the images are needed for a meeting, deadline, city submission, or investor presentation, share that date as early as possible.

A clear timeline helps the rendering team recommend a realistic approach.

Custom Styling and Art Direction

Some projects require a specific visual tone, brand direction, or marketing style.

Custom styling may include specific mood references, branded colors, custom signage, lifestyle direction, curated entourage, seasonal atmosphere, dramatic lighting, luxury presentation style, or matching an existing campaign.

The more specific the visual direction, the more important it is to provide references early.

Entourage, People, Vehicles, and Activity

People, cars, furniture, bikes, landscaping, and other activity can help make an image feel alive, but they also require thoughtful placement.

Too little activity can make a space feel empty. Too much activity can distract from the architecture.

The best approach depends on the project type and the audience.

Landscaping and Site Context

Landscape detail can have a major effect on exterior images.

A simple lawn and planting approach is different from a detailed courtyard, rooftop, pool deck, plaza, streetscape, or amenity garden.

If landscape plans are available, provide them early. If they are not available, reference images can help guide the direction.

Animation or Video

Animation is a separate type of scope from still renderings.

It may require camera path planning, additional modeling, more extensive scene preparation, motion testing, rendering time, editing, music, text overlays, and revisions.

If animation may be needed, mention it early so the still image process can be planned with that possibility in mind.

13. Architectural Rendering Brief Template

Use this section to organize the key details of your project before requesting a quote.

You do not need to fill out every field. Complete what applies and use the notes areas where more explanation is needed.

Project Information

Field	Response
Project Name	_____
Project Location	_____
Primary Contact	_____
Company	_____
Email	_____
Phone	_____

Project Type

- ☐ Multifamily
- ☐ Mixed-use
- ☐ Retail
- ☐ Office
- ☐ Hospitality
- ☐ Senior living
- ☐ Student housing
- ☐ Residential
- ☐ Interior design
- ☐ Amenity space
- ☐ Other: _____

Current Project Stage

- ☐ Concept design
- ☐ Schematic design
- ☐ Design development
- ☐ Construction documents
- ☐ Marketing / leasing phase
- ☐ City / approval presentation
- ☐ Investor / ownership presentation
- ☐ Other: _____

Purpose of the Renderings

What will the images be used for?

- ☐ City meeting or approval presentation
- ☐ Investor presentation
- ☐ Ownership / stakeholder review
- ☐ Website
- ☐ Brochure
- ☐ Leasing materials
- ☐ Sales materials
- ☐ Social media / advertising
- ☐ Internal design review
- ☐ Public relations / press
- ☐ Other: _____

Briefly describe the goal of the images:

Target Audience

Who needs to understand or respond to these renderings?

- ☐ City officials / planning board
- ☐ Investors
- ☐ Ownership group
- ☐ Potential tenants
- ☐ Buyers
- ☐ Leasing team
- ☐ Design team
- ☐ General public
- ☐ Internal decision makers
- ☐ Other: _____

What should this audience understand quickly when they see the images?

Required Views

View Category	Views Needed
Exterior Views	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____
Interior Views	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____
Aerial / Site Views	1. _____ 2. _____
Amenity / Lifestyle Views	1. _____ 2. _____
Other Views	_____

Deadline Information

Field	Response
Desired Delivery Date	
Presentation / Meeting Date	
Are there milestone dates before final delivery?	☐ Yes ☐ No
If yes, list them here	

Reference Files and Drawings Available

- ☐ CAD files
- ☐ Revit model
- ☐ SketchUp model
- ☐ Rhino model
- ☐ 3ds Max model
- ☐ PDF drawings
- ☐ Floor plans
- ☐ Elevations
- ☐ Sections
- ☐ Site plan
- ☐ Landscape plan
- ☐ Interior design plans
- ☐ Material board
- ☐ Furniture references
- ☐ Lighting references
- ☐ Branding guidelines
- ☐ Previous renderings

- ☐ Example images / mood references
- ☐ Other: _____

File notes:

Design Intent

What is the project meant to feel like?

- ☐ Modern
- ☐ Warm
- ☐ Luxury
- ☐ Minimal
- ☐ Urban
- ☐ Residential
- ☐ Hospitality-inspired
- ☐ Family-friendly
- ☐ High-end commercial
- ☐ Approachable
- ☐ Other: _____

Short description of the design intent:

Mood and Style Direction

Are there any visual references, completed projects, brands, or example images that show the desired style?

Reference links or notes:

Preferred image tone:

- ☐ Bright daylight
- ☐ Warm afternoon
- ☐ Dusk / evening
- ☐ Soft and natural

- ☐ Dramatic and polished
- ☐ Clean and architectural
- ☐ Lifestyle-focused
- ☐ Marketing-focused
- ☐ Other: _____

Materials and Finishes

Category	Notes
Exterior Materials	_____
Interior Materials	_____
Important Finish Notes	_____

Landscape and Site Context

Is landscaping important to the presentation?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure

Available landscape information:

- ☐ Landscape plan
- ☐ Planting references
- ☐ Site photos
- ☐ Streetscape references
- ☐ General direction only

Notes:

Lighting, Time of Day, and Atmosphere

Preferred lighting direction:

- ☐ Daylight
- ☐ Dusk
- ☐ Evening

- ☐ Morning
- ☐ Golden hour
- ☐ Interior ambient lighting
- ☐ Not sure, need recommendation

Any specific mood or atmosphere?

People, Vehicles, and Activity Level

Should the images include people, cars, pets, bikes, or activity?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Minimal
- ☐ Moderate
- ☐ Active / lively
- ☐ Not sure

Activity notes:

Examples may include pedestrians, residents using amenities, cars in parking areas, people in lobby, outdoor dining, pool activity, leasing activity, or workplace activity.

Branding and Marketing Needs

Will the renderings be used in branded materials?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure yet

Branding needs:

- ☐ Logo placement
- ☐ Signage
- ☐ Leasing graphics
- ☐ Brochure layout support
- ☐ Website hero image
- ☐ Investor deck visuals

- ☐ Social media crops
- ☐ Multiple aspect ratios
- ☐ Other: _____

Notes:

Additional Notes

Use this space for anything important that does not fit above.

14. Interior Rendering Preparation Notes

Complete this section only if your project includes interior renderings.

Interior renderings often need more detailed finish and fixture information than exterior renderings. You may not have every selection finalized, and that is okay. Use this section to identify what is known and what may still need to be confirmed.

Interior-Only Note

This section is for interior rendering projects only. It may not be needed for exterior-only projects.

Interior Spaces Included

Which interior spaces need renderings?

- ☐ Lobby
- ☐ Leasing office
- ☐ Clubroom
- ☐ Amenity lounge
- ☐ Fitness center
- ☐ Model unit
- ☐ Kitchen
- ☐ Living room
- ☐ Bedroom
- ☐ Bathroom
- ☐ Restaurant / bar
- ☐ Office interior
- ☐ Hospitality room / suite
- ☐ Corridor
- ☐ Other: _____

Notes:

Interior Finish Direction

What interior finish information is available?

- ☐ Wall colors
- ☐ Flooring selections
- ☐ Baseboard direction
- ☐ Crown molding direction
- ☐ Door style
- ☐ Door hardware
- ☐ Window casing / trim direction
- ☐ Cabinet style
- ☐ Cabinet finish
- ☐ Cabinet hardware
- ☐ Countertop material
- ☐ Backsplash material
- ☐ Appliance selections
- ☐ Sink selections
- ☐ Faucet selections
- ☐ Bathroom vanity selections
- ☐ Lighting fixture selections
- ☐ Furniture references
- ☐ Artwork / decor references
- ☐ Window treatment references
- ☐ Other: _____

Notes:

Room-by-Room Notes

Room / Area	Notes
Foyer / Entry	_____
Living / Great Room	_____
Kitchen	_____
Dining	_____
Bedroom / Model Unit	_____
Bathroom	_____
Amenity Space	_____
Other	_____

Interior Reference Materials

Helpful interior references may include finish schedules, material boards, furniture references, cabinet drawings, appliance specifications, plumbing fixture specifications, lighting fixture selections, interior elevations, reflected ceiling plans, inspiration images, previous renderings, and notes from the design team.

Available interior reference files:

15. Quick Project Readiness Score

Use this quick scorecard to estimate how prepared your project is before requesting a rendering quote.

For each item, choose the score that best matches your current status.

0 = Not ready

1 = Partially ready

2 = Ready

Readiness Scorecard

Category	Item	Score
Project Basics	Project name and type are clear	☐ 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2
Project Basics	Project location is known	☐ 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2
Project Basics	Current project stage is clear	☐ 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2
Project Basics	Primary contact and decision-maker are identified	☐ 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2
Purpose and Audience	Purpose of renderings is defined	☐ 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2
Purpose and Audience	Target audience is known	☐ 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2
Purpose and Audience	Presentation or marketing use is clear	☐ 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2
Purpose and Audience	Deadline or meeting date is known	☐ 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2
Files and Drawings	Plans are available	☐ 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2
Files and Drawings	Elevations are available	☐ 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2

Category	Item	Score
Files and Drawings	Site plan is available, if needed	☐ 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2
Files and Drawings	3D model is available, if applicable	☐ 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2
Files and Drawings	Material or finish information is available	☐ 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2
View Planning	Number of renderings is estimated	☐ 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2
View Planning	Main views are identified	☐ 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2
View Planning	Interior vs. exterior needs are clear	☐ 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2
View Planning	Aerial, amenity, or detail views are considered	☐ 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2
Visual Direction	Mood or style direction is defined	☐ 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2
Visual Direction	Reference images are available	☐ 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2
Visual Direction	Lighting or time-of-day preference is known	☐ 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2
Visual Direction	People, vehicles, or activity level is considered	☐ 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2
Review Process	Reviewers are identified	☐ 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2
Review Process	Feedback process is clear	☐ 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2
Review Process	Known design changes are communicated	☐ 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2
Review Process	Final approval path is understood	☐ 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2

Project Readiness Score: _____ / 50

Score Guide

Score	Readiness Level	What It Means
40 to 50	Strongly Prepared	Your project is likely ready for a productive rendering scope discussion.
28 to 39	Mostly Prepared	You likely have enough information to begin a conversation. Some details may still need to be clarified.

Score	Readiness Level	What It Means
15 to 27	Early Stage	A rendering studio can still help, but the scope may need more discussion before pricing and scheduling are clearly defined.
0 to 14	Needs More Definition	Focus first on project purpose, available drawings, desired views, and timeline.

16. What to Send RM Design Studio

Before sending your project for review, gather the most useful information in one place.

Final Send Checklist

- ☐ Completed starter kit or project brief
- ☐ Available drawings
- ☐ Available 3D model, if applicable
- ☐ Site plan, if applicable
- ☐ Landscape plan, if applicable
- ☐ Interior drawings, if applicable
- ☐ Material or finish references
- ☐ Furniture or fixture references, if applicable
- ☐ Desired view list
- ☐ Deadline or presentation date
- ☐ Intended use of the renderings
- ☐ Reference images or style direction
- ☐ Branding or marketing requirements
- ☐ Notes on what is confirmed vs still undecided
- ☐ Main contact and reviewer information

Final Project Notes

Questions	Response
Most important rendering goal	
Most important view needed	

Questions	Response
Biggest deadline or presentation date	_____ _____
Files currently available	_____ _____
Open decisions or missing information	_____ _____
Questions for RM Design Studio	_____ _____

17. Have a Project Ready for Renderings?

Send RM Design Studio your completed starter kit, drawings, or project notes, and we'll help you understand the rendering scope.

Whether you have a full drawing package, an early design concept, a Revit model, a SketchUp file, or only a few project notes, we can review what you have and help identify what may be needed to move forward.

Contact RM Design Studio for a Quote

If your project is ready for architectural renderings, send us your project brief, available drawings, desired views, and deadline.

We'll help you clarify the scope and understand the best next step.

Send Us Your Project Brief

You can use this starter kit as your rendering brief.

Fill in the sections that apply to your project and send it along with your drawings, models, or reference files.

Do not worry if every section is not complete. The goal is to give us a clear starting point.

Talk to Us About Your Rendering Needs

Not sure which views you need yet? That is normal.

RM Design Studio can help you think through which images will be most useful for your presentation, marketing package, leasing campaign, city meeting, investor deck, or internal review.

Ready to start?

Send your project information, drawings, or completed starter kit to RM Design Studio and we'll help you understand the rendering scope.