

01 FIELD GUIDE FOR ARCHITECTS & DESIGNERS

AI Tools *for* Architects & Designers.

The complete workflow guide. Tool reviews, copy-and-use templates, and the real prompts we run on live projects.

FIG. 01, RENDER STUDY



BUILDING SURVEYS • 3D MODELLING • VISUALISATION • INTERIOR DESIGN

00 CONTENTS

Eight chapters, one workflow.

Read top-to-bottom on first pass; return to chapters 03-05 as a working reference during projects.

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01 INTRODUCTION

You've heard the hype. What you **actually** need is different.

This guide covers only the tools that have stayed in real workflows, used daily by architecture firms across Europe. We cut everything that didn't survive a billable month.

A TOOL MAKES THE LIST IF IT

01 Saves real time

Measured in hours per week, not theoretically.

02 Keeps your IP safe

Sensible defaults, no leaky training contracts.

03 Works inside existing software

SketchUp, Rhino, Revit, no platform migration.

04 Is simple to use

Junior staff productive in under a day.



02 CHAPTER

Five tools. That's the whole stack.

Total cost: roughly €40-60 per seat per month. Covers strategy, ideation, image refinement, rendering, and project memory.

01	Claude Strategy & research. Brief analysis, options memos, client letters.	2-4 HRS / WK	€20 /MO
02	Midjourney Design exploration. Mood, materiality, façade studies.	4-8 HRS / WK	€10-20 /MO
03	AI Image Editor Image refinement. Cleanup, recompose, light + sky control.	3-5 HRS / WK	Free
04	SketchUp + AI Fast rendering. Export → AI pass → photoreal in 15 min.	6-10 HRS / WK	Existing
05	Notion Project memory. Briefs, prompts, decisions, client logs.	3-5 HRS / WK	€10 /USR

TOTAL / MONTH

~€60

SETUP TIME

1 day

SEAT

x 1

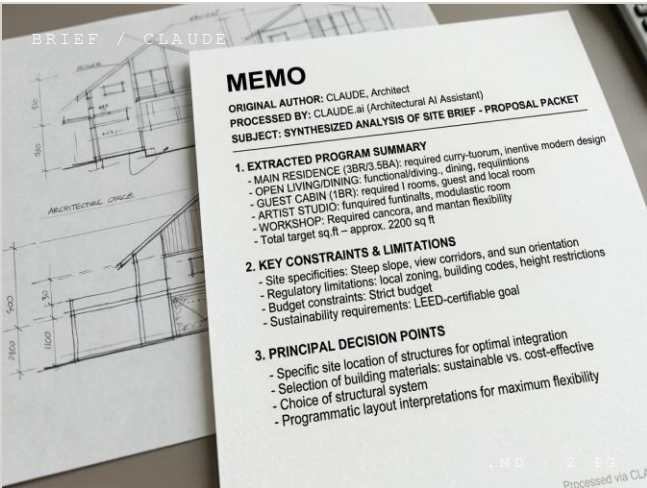
03 TEMPLATE

Design concept phase.

COMPRESSION

4 wk → 2 wk

STEP 01



CLAUDE

Analyze the brief.

Extract program, constraints, decision points. Output a one-page memo.

STEP 02



MIDJOURNEY

Explore visuals.

Three directions x three frames each. Pin a directional set.

STEP 03

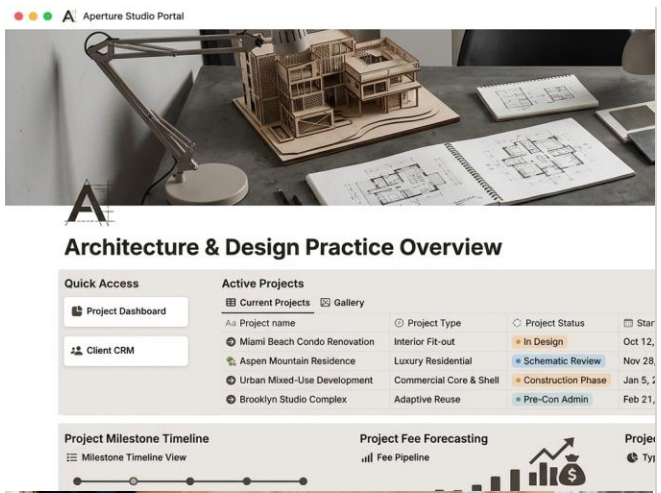


AI EDITOR

Refine images.

Recompose, restage, unify materiality across the chosen direction.

STEP 04



NOTION + DECK

Present to client.

A single decision document, three directions, one recommendation.

04 FAST RENDER

SketchUp + AI in fifteen minutes.

15 min

Export from SketchUp, pass through an AI editor, deliver a photoreal client image. No 3ds Max. No re-renders.



STAGE 01

Export from SketchUp

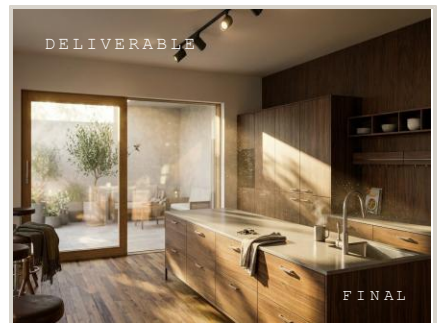
PNG · 4K · 1 MIN



STAGE 02

AI editor pass

MATERIALS · LIGHT · SKY



STAGE 03

Photoreal output

CLIENT · 4K · 13 MIN

3DS MAX

No.

RE-RENDER

No.

RESULT

15 min.

05 PER PROJECT

Twenty-five hours, **back.**

Measured across one mid-size refurbishment. The bulk of the saving comes from rendering and material studies, not from automating design itself.

PHASE	BEFORE	WITH AI	SAVED
CAD modelling	40 hrs	40 hrs	-
Rendering	19 hrs	1 hrs	18 hrs
Documentation	6 hrs	2 hrs	4 hrs
TOTAL	65 hrs	44 hrs	22 hrs



HEADLINE

36%

PROJECT HOURS RECLAIMED

22 hrs / 65 hrs

06 CHAPTER

Real prompts we use, verbatim.

Both prompts assume you've already given Claude the project context. Edit the bracketed values; keep the structure.

PROMPT 01, REFURBISHMENT STRATEGY

```
CLAUDE, STRATEGY MODE

You are an experienced architect.

Analyze a [1970s apartment], [85 m2], budget [€45k], timeline [3 months].

Create a material strategy that identifies
[retain / replace / refurbish] options with cost & impact trade-offs.

Output: a one-page memo, plus a table.
```

PROMPT 02, DESIGN CONCEPT BRIEFING

```
CLAUDE, CONCEPT MODE

Design [3 concepts] for a [1,200 m2] historic community center.
Budget [€1.2M], timeline [18 months].

Concepts:
01 [minimal intervention]
02 [moderate renovation]
03 [comprehensive redesign]
```

06 CONTINUED

Four more, by phase.

Site analysis, materials, client communication, planning. Same rules, edit the brackets, keep the structure.

PROMPT 03, SITE & CONTEXT ANALYSIS

```

CLAUDE, ANALYSIS MODE

Site: [XXX m] [address / postcode] , plot
.
Climate zone [X], orientation [N/S/E/W] .

Summarise:
  a. solar gain & overshadowing
  b. prevailing wind & views
  c. local material vernacular
  d. planning constraints worth flagging early

Output: bullet brief + 3 design
implications.
```

PROMPT 04, MATERIAL SPECIFICATION

```

CLAUDE, SPEC MODE

Project: [type, m²] [low / mid / high] . Budget tier:
.
Priority: embodied carbon
, then cost, then maintenance.

Propose 3 material palettes for:
  structure · envelope · interior finish

Per palette: lifespan, supplier examples (EU),
and one risk to flag with the client.
```

PROMPT 05, CLIENT EMAIL, DESIGN UPDATE

```

CLAUDE, COMMS MODE

Draft a client email for [project name] .
Tone: warm, confident, never defensive.

Cover:
  01 what changed since last week
  02 one decision we need from them
  03 next milestone & date

Max 180 words. Plain text. No marketing speak.
```

PROMPT 06, PLANNING STATEMENT DRAFT

```

CLAUDE, PLANNING MODE

Draft a design & access statement
outline for
[scheme] in [local authority] .

Address: use, amount, layout, scale,
landscaping,
appearance, access. Cite the relevant local
plan policies
where you can; flag the ones I should
verify.

Output: section headings + 2-3 sentences each.
```

07 CHAPTER

Your first week.

A five-day rollout for one team. Don't roll out firm-wide before you've shipped a real project through it.

Day 1

Provision accounts. Claude Pro (€20/mo) and Midjourney (€10/mo). Add team SSO if you have it.

SIGN UP

Day 2-3

Brief analysis (30 min) · **design directions** (1 hr) · **refinement** (30 min). Use a real project, not a sandbox.

TEST LIVE

Day 4-5

Walk through the templates, assign roles (strategy / image / render / docs), and run one project end-to-end.

TRAIN THE TEAM

Week 2+

Track time saved by phase. Drop tools that don't stick. Re-run the templates with feedback.

MEASURE &
REFINE



G. 04 PRACTICE

DAY 4-5

08 CHAPTER

Two columns. Read both.

AI is a research and exploration tool. It is not a stamp, not a 3D modeller, and not a building -code expert.

• SAFE PRACTICES

- + Use AI for **internal exploration**, concepts, mood, options.
- + Keep prompts **vague on sensitive projects**, names, addresses, budgets.
- + **Always review outputs** before they leave the studio.
- + Keep **final designs under your control**, AI proposes, you decide.

• AVOID

- ✗ Don't paste **full client briefs** into public tools.
- ✗ Don't assume AI knows **your local building code**.
- ✗ Don't replace **3D modellers** with AI renders.
- ✗ Don't use AI images in **construction documents**.

09 CHAPTER

Where to start & how we help.

TOOL LINKS

Claude Pro

claude.ai

Midjourney/Render AI

midjourney.com

Notion

notion.com

SketchUp

sketchup.com

FURTHER

ELEMENTA

elementa.cloud

- THANKS FOR READING

Got a project that needs to be **seen**?

Whether you have drawings ready, a building with no plans, or just a rough idea, share it with us. We'll figure out the right starting point together.

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