CGI

Showing the solution. Selling the story. Making the sale.



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CGI TEAM



M&S DIRFT DAVENTRY

> We create images that go beyond just pretty pictures ... at almost every stage of a project's life, from the idea to completion.

The phrase "A picture is worth a thousand words" may originally refer to images in streetcar adverts in the US* but for the visualisation team at SGP, it is the touchstone of our work today.

We create images that go beyond just pretty pictures, and help to not only make a narrative understandable, but develop multiple levels of engagement at almost every stage of a project's life, from the idea to completion.

We can create a range of designs that bring to life the ideas that are in the heads of our architect colleagues, or drawn on paper or in 2D plans. We can show a client the different options for how a space can be laid out and how a structure will look and be experienced, inside and out. We can develop cut-out views to show volume, how the structures fill the space and how those spaces and structures fit together and within the existing environment.

Visuals allow the client to more easily interrogate the proposals, bringing the project "to life" through exploded diagrams or 360º tours or virtual reality experiences. Visual media improves accessibility to ideas, promotes clearer communication, and encourages challenge, debate and feedback.



Part of our role is to choose the type of visualisation to best suit the project stage. At the early stages, such as pre-planning, we can produce a more stylised image or sketch, illustrative rather than detailed, creating a feeling rather than a blueprint. For planning applications or consultations, we show solutions. We bring in more details, present key views and address areas where there may be concerns, as well as showing how pre-planning consultation issues have been addressed.

A serious example of how visualisation can support understanding of a project at planning stage – or, perhaps more importantly, avoid misunderstanding, is with verified views. These are not a sexy aspect of a planning application, but they are crucial. For a recent project, how much of a warehouse was visible from key points was a vital concern to the planners and local community. We used a software called TwinMotion, a real-time visualisation tool to render raw drone footage into twenty accurate and realistic views from different points around the site. Viewers could "scroll" forward through time, to see how trees planted as part of the development would grow and mask facades and elevations. We have the software and skills to show the landscaping and the surrounding countryside through the different seasons, and, in practice, we have developed cladding colour palettes from such work. Weather, sun position and time of day, or night, can be included to offer decision makers the best and most dependable information available. All this is presented in an easy to understand format, be that 2D, 3D or fully immersive in SGP's in-house VR suite.

SGP's visualisation work is a strong design tool for the interiors of our buildings. We collaborate with SGP's interior design team to develop visual interpretation of the client's brief, be that materials, colour palettes or furnishings. If the client, or the designer, isn't happy, we can easily change to the details to create a range of options. With SGP's "One SGP" approach, it is straightforward to bring together structural, interior and visualisation experts to develop the best approaches to the scheme.

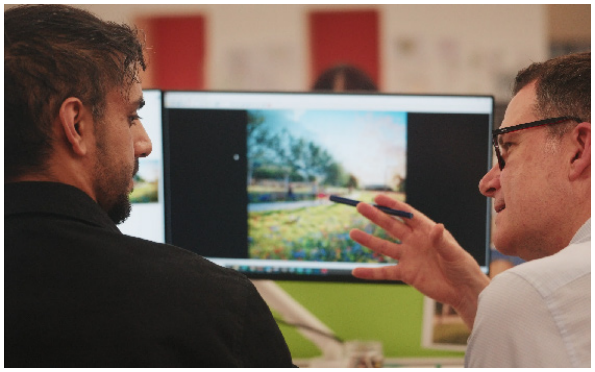


And it's not just in commercial or domestic interiors that we use these techniques. CGIs and cut-outs can show different configurations within the shell of a huge warehouse. The development of large scale warehousing is on-going and a proliferation of the types of internal layouts required pushes us to develop more options. Not only different configurations of racking and logistics handling systems, but we can show pathways for the internal movement of vehicles and people and the placement of internal subdivisions. The development of multi-functional spaces has gone beyond just office space and into laboratories, and even film sets. Our skills allow us to swap out different interiors and offer new perspectives to potential tenants.



Probably the most traditional role for visualisations is to help developers market their assets, providing various images, including photorealistic views with figures that bring life to the spaces. Our visuals are accurate as well as detailed, depicting the area as it would appear in real life (but with less rain), and it's important that we do not "lose the viewer" with some faux pas that draws them out of the space and undermines the credibility of the whole presentation. Isometric views – like a doll's house opening – emphasise the narrative and bring characters to the story. Animations, fly-throughs and immersive technology allow our clients, their clients and members of the community to experience aspects of the development from a personal POV.

Because we work very closely with, sometimes two desks down from, SGP's talented architects, our renders and CGIs have the level of real-world accuracy that is required for planning applications and later stages of projects. We work with their models that live on the internal SGP system. No taking days to answer urgent questions or pass information backwards and forwards. The team is integrated and the workflow optimised to minimise delays and potential inaccuracies. As visualisers, we have direct access to architects, to their knowledge – about the client, the project and the wider technical requirements.



At SGP we do not shy away from new technology, and we have accepted AI as an appropriate and useful tool to help us deliver what we need, for the practice and our clients. If it is suitable for the client and the project, and in the hands of a talented visualiser, AI can speed up the process and make the department more efficient without compromising the final output.

The built environment industry is a mixture of emotion, practicality and business sense. We are place-makers, building purposeful structures for humans, that have to be safe, fit-for-purpose and, to a greater or lesser extent, attractive. For the SGP visualisation team, our role is to create images to develop the story of a project and its place and the people who will be using it, and offer it in one of many formats to attract, explain, and create confidence.







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