sketchupschool

YOUTUBE VIDEO NOTES FOR:

Before You Choose an AI Rendering Tool, Get This Right in SketchUp



Prepare an AI-ready SketchUp model: choose the image job, save the view, clean up misleading details, and decide what to model or leave open.

These notes live at www.sketchupschool.com/prepare-sketchup-model-for-ai-rendering-notes

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A convincing AI rendering starts with the information you give it. Before comparing rendering tools, get clear about what your SketchUp model needs to communicate.

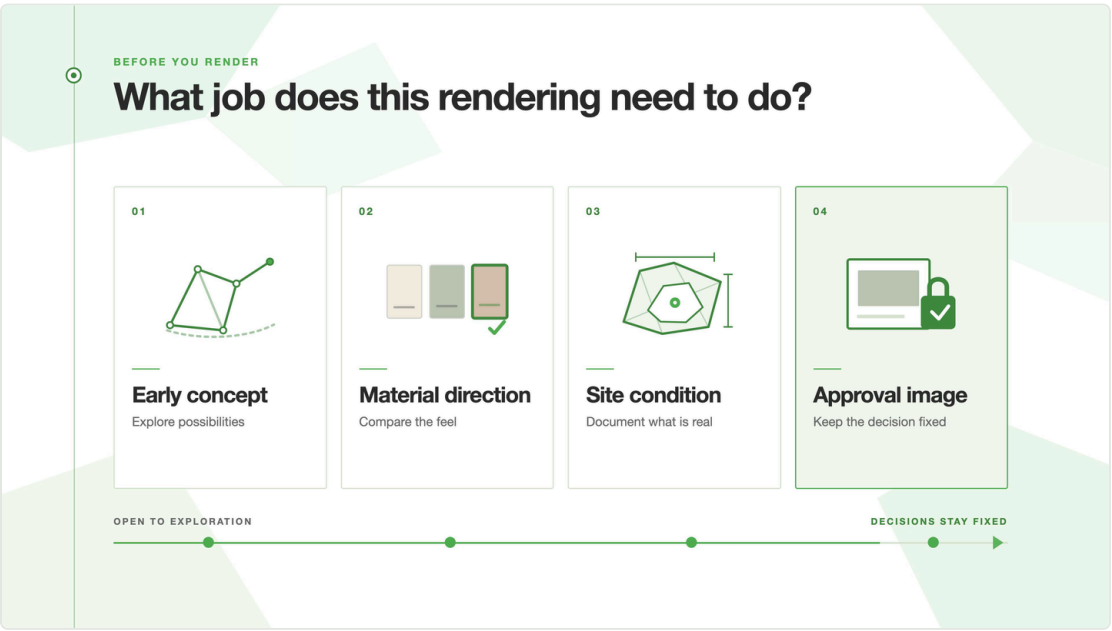
The goal is the Goldilocks level of detail: enough intentional information to get the result you need, without spending hours modeling things AI could help you explore.

#1 Decide what the image must do

To prepare your SketchUp model for AI rendering, start with one question:

What job does this rendering need to do?

- **Early concept:** explore possibilities while design decisions are still open.
- **Material direction:** compare the look and feel of different options.
- **Site condition:** document something real that the image needs to represent.
- **Approval image:** keep a specific decision fixed.



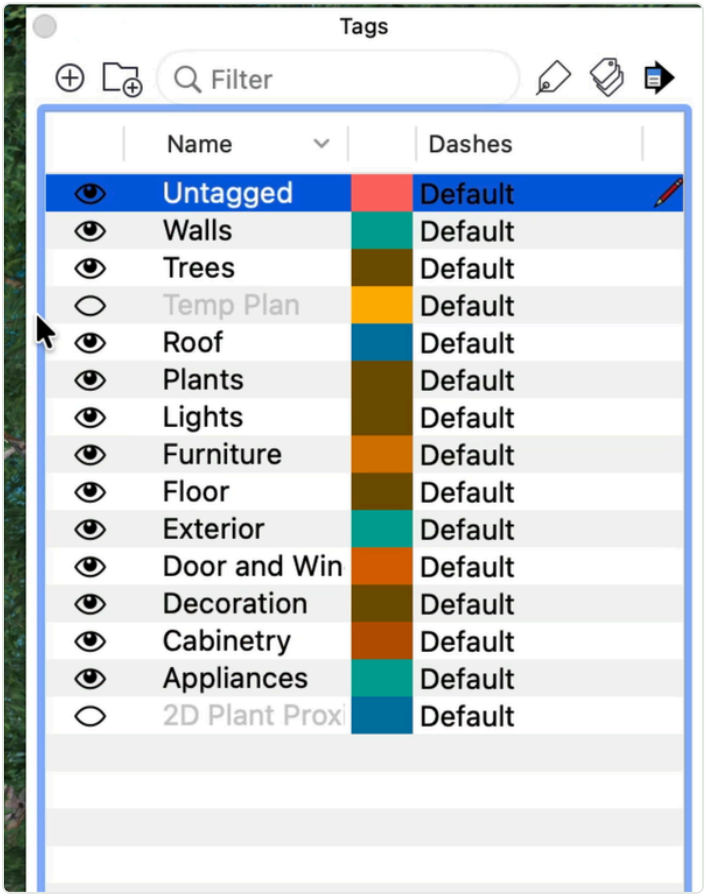
Choose the job before choosing the rendering tool.

These are different jobs. Each asks for different information in SketchUp and a different level of control from your rendering workflow. Decide which parts of the image need direct control and which can remain open to creative exploration.

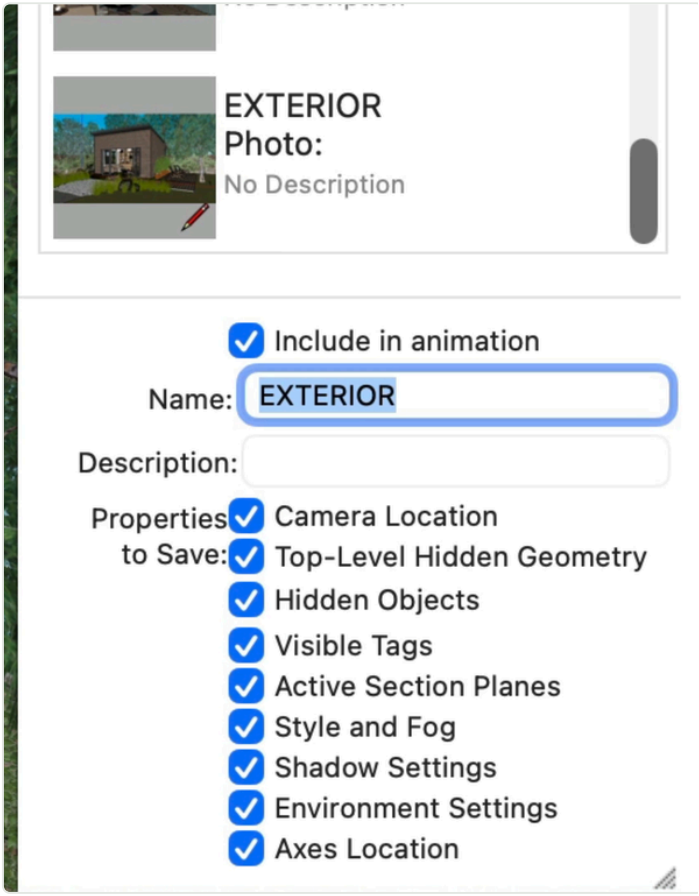
#2 Set up and save the view

Once you know what the image needs to do, lock down the view you plan to render.

1. Find a strong **camera angle**.
2. Adjust the **perspective and field of view** until the framing matches the image you want.
3. Use **Tags** to control the visibility of different project elements.
4. When everything looks right, save the view as a **Scene** so you can return to it as you develop the project and make more renderings.



Use Tags to control which elements appear in your view.



Save the view as a Scene so you can return to it.

You can ask AI to render a view that differs from what it sees in SketchUp. But then it has to invent what it cannot see, which makes that approach unreliable for most situations.

#3 Clean up misleading details

Visible triangulation and faceted faces can become unintended design information. AI may interpret those lines as something that belongs in the finished image. In the rock example, the unwanted pattern carries through into the AI rendering.



Before source cleanup: the AI rendering carries through unwanted edges.

When an object is meant to read as smooth, use **Soften/Smooth Edges** to clean up the appearance of non-design edges and faces.



After cleanup: soften non-design edges when the object should read as smooth.

Also hide or delete stray edges, unwanted faces, and construction guides. Anything visible in the source view can become a cue for the rendering.

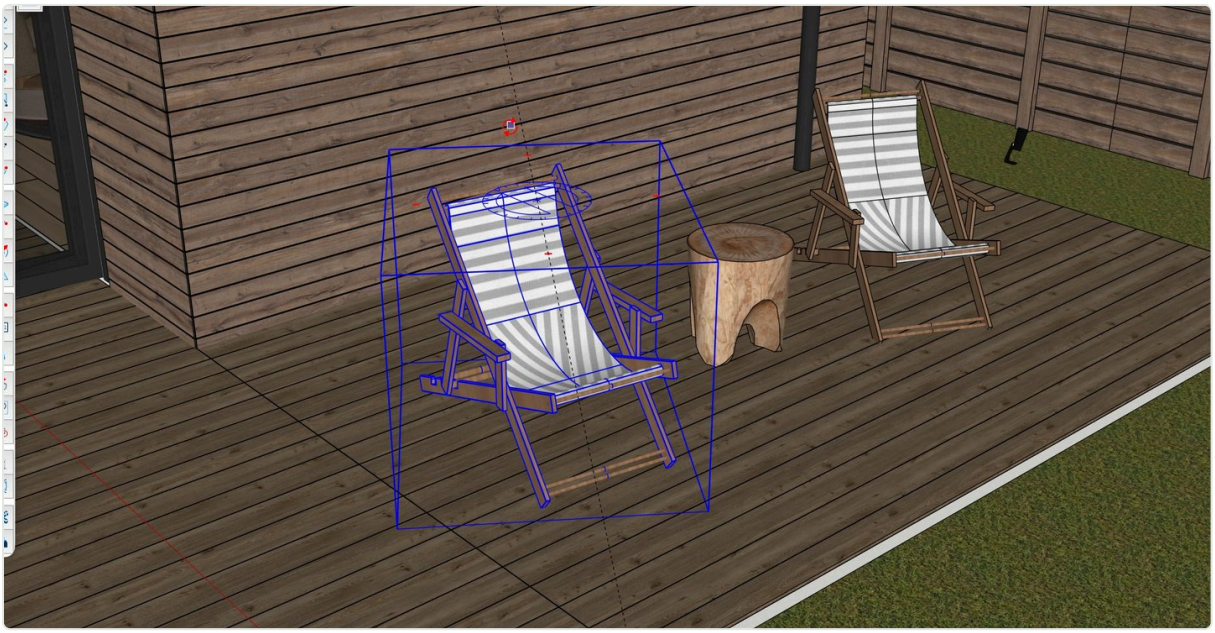
Remove visual information that does not describe the design you intend.

#4 Model what must stay accurate

You can model too little and ask AI to invent nearly everything. You can also model too much and lose hours finding or building context that AI could handle faster.

The useful balance depends on the job of the image:

- **Early concepts:** leave room for AI to explore options.
- **Final selections:** establish more of the decisions in the underlying SketchUp model.



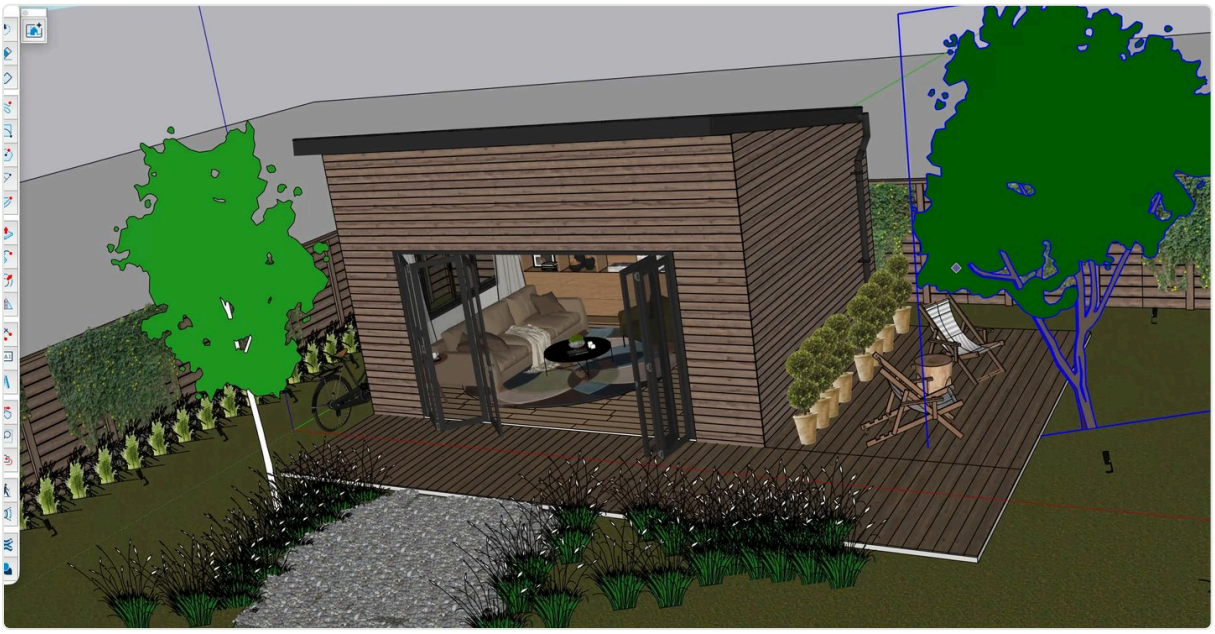
Model the decisions you want the rendering to respect.

Model the elements that need to remain accurate, then look for opportunities where it makes sense for AI to fill in the blanks.

#5 Guide AI with proxies and references

When placement or scale matters but you do not have time to find or build a detailed object, experiment with **placeholders, or proxies**.

A proxy might be a simple 2D or 3D object, or a color, material, or image that represents something you want AI to replace. It tells AI where something belongs and how much space it occupies. A prompt or reference image then helps direct what goes in its place.



Proxies communicate placement and scale without a detailed plant model.

In the garden-studio example, simple tree representations provide location and scale cues. AI turns those placeholders into a more realistic interpretation.



AI interprets the placeholders as more realistic context.

This gives you a middle path: you are not finding every perfect high-detail model, and you are not asking AI to guess where everything belongs.

Whether AI is reinterpreting a proxy or filling an empty area, plan how you will direct it. Use a **prompt**, or a **reference image** when the tool supports one.



The reference supplies a landscape direction.

Here, the reference communicates a landscape style without requiring every tree, rock, and plant to be modeled. Combined with proxies, the model communicates major placement and massing while the reference guides the visual style.



Proxies guide major placement; the reference guides the landscape style.

Treat this as an early concept rendering, not an accurate specification of final landscape decisions.

#6 Fix the source when problems repeat

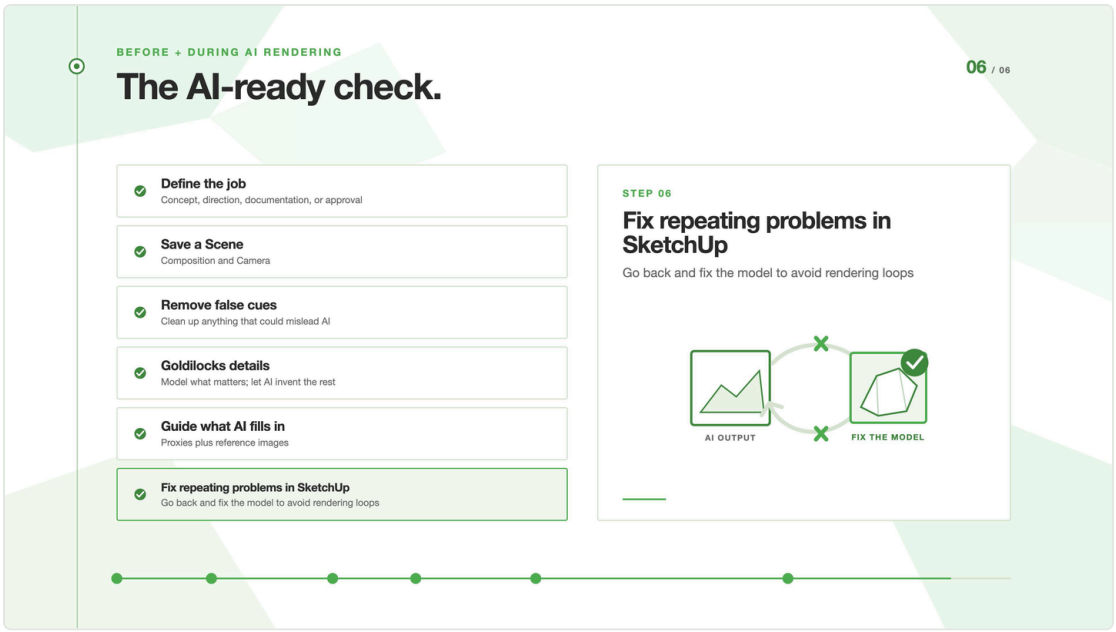
Sometimes the first AI image is useful. Sometimes another generation gets you closer. But if a second or third attempt is not fixing the problem, pause and ask:

Could I fix this by changing something in SketchUp first?

Editing the source model can be faster than a frustrating game of AI whack-a-mole.

Use the AI-ready check before choosing a tool or starting another rendering loop:

1. Decide what job the image needs to do.
2. Set up the composition, camera, and Scene.
3. Clean up anything that could mislead AI.
4. Decide what must be modeled and what AI can invent.
5. Use proxies for placement, scale, and massing, and references for visual direction when supported.
6. Return to SketchUp when the same problem keeps repeating.



Fix the source before entering a never-ending rendering loop.

That is an AI-ready model: not too much detail, not too little, but enough intentional information to get the result you need. It puts you in a better position to choose the rendering tool and workflow that fit the job.

> **Which rendering approach fits your project?**
> Tell us what you are working on and the kind of images you need to create. We can help you find a clear path forward, whether you are improving your SketchUp workflow or choosing an AI rendering tool. Tell us about your situation →

YOUR NEXT STEPS

We hope our *Before You Choose an AI Rendering Tool, Get This Right in SketchUp* video and these notes have gotten you started down the right path.

From here, it's definitely possible to learn everything on your own. But if you don't have the time to figure out what you need to know, and you can't afford to pick up bad habits, we recommend checking out our **Video Course Library**.

It's filled with $8700 worth of SketchUp training exclusively for professionals — including our Intro to AI Rendering course.

Try our courses for free



Intro to AI Rendering — one of the courses in the Video Course Library