Roderick Bates, Head of Integrated Practice at Enscape, explains the benefits of 3D architectural visualizations and how architects can incorporate them in their design workflow.

SEAB: Enscape is a leading developer of real-time rendering and design workflow technology for the Architecture, Engineering and Construction (AEC) industries. How is your technology used in architectural design?

Roderick: Enscape is first and foremost used as a workflow optimization tool during architectural design. Essentially, this means Enscape is used, in real-time, as a translator of BIM and CAD model data into a visually realistic and intuitively understood model. This not only enables architects to understand how their designs will exactly look once built but also allows them to easily and effectively communicate their designs to other parties involved in building design and delivery, including clients, designers, engineers, and contractors.

In addition to this critical design workflow function, users also leverage Enscape to create renders, VR experiences, and exportable panoramas during the design process. These visualizations put a project in its best light and are frequently deployed for internal and external design reviews, public engagements, etc.

SEAB: One of the most recent developments in the architecture field is 3D architectural visualizations. What are these and are they different from BIM?

Roderick: While BIM platforms are 3D, they aren’t what most people describe as visualizations. Instead, they are tools for design authorship and the collection of critical information necessary to construct a building. 3D visualizations, on the other hand, are about communication, and specifically communicating designs in a way that makes them tangible, in a visual, immersive, and experiential sense, before the building exists in a physical sense.

SEAB: What are the advantages of 3D visualizations for architects?

Roderick: Visualization creates an effective medium for communication. A high-quality render sent to a client or a real-time visualization of a BIM model provides ways for the design intent to be communicated in a manner that is easily and quickly understood, with no translation or interpretation required. For architects, this means that decisions are made faster and aesthetic opportunities can be identified. Conversely, mistakes are avoided before the design progresses to the point where undoing them is both costly and time-consuming.

SEAB: What is the future of 3D architectural visualizations?

Roderick: When I think of the future of architectural visualization, I see the visualization interface becoming much more data-rich, encompassing not only information related to how something looks, but it will also become the vehicle by which more complex data, such as product specifications and architectural details will be communicated. The platform will be inherently easy to navigate and will offer the potential to become a far more effective means of sharing critical project data across a broad array of stakeholders without the need for specialized knowledge.

SEAB: Recently, Enscape and Chaos, a world leader in photorealistic rendering technology merged. Together, the merger will establish a global leader in the 3D visualization and design workflow software sectors, with a focus on the AEC, Visual Effects (VFX) and Product Design verticals. What kind of design possibilities will this merger open up to architects?
Roderick: The possibilities are still being fully mapped out, with far-reaching implications. However, in the short term, the focus will be to offer a true end-to-end visualization workflow for our customers. This means that all project visualization needs, from rapid, real-time rendering to producing photorealistic scenes, can be addressed through a single portfolio of products and a design workflow to maximize efficiency and eliminate redundant work.

About Enscape
Enscape develops high-quality real-time rendering, visualization, and virtual reality software for the global AEC industry. Enscape integrates design and visualization workflows into one and gives designers the power to create realistic renderings based on their existing planning data and easily produce videos, panoramic images, and VR simulations. Enscape software is compatible with Revit, SketchUp, Rhino, Archicad, and Vectorworks and is used by renowned architecture firms in over 150 countries. The company operates from offices in Karlsruhe (Germany) and New York (USA). (www.enscape3d.com)