



# DO ANDROIDS DREAM OF DISTANT FUTURES?

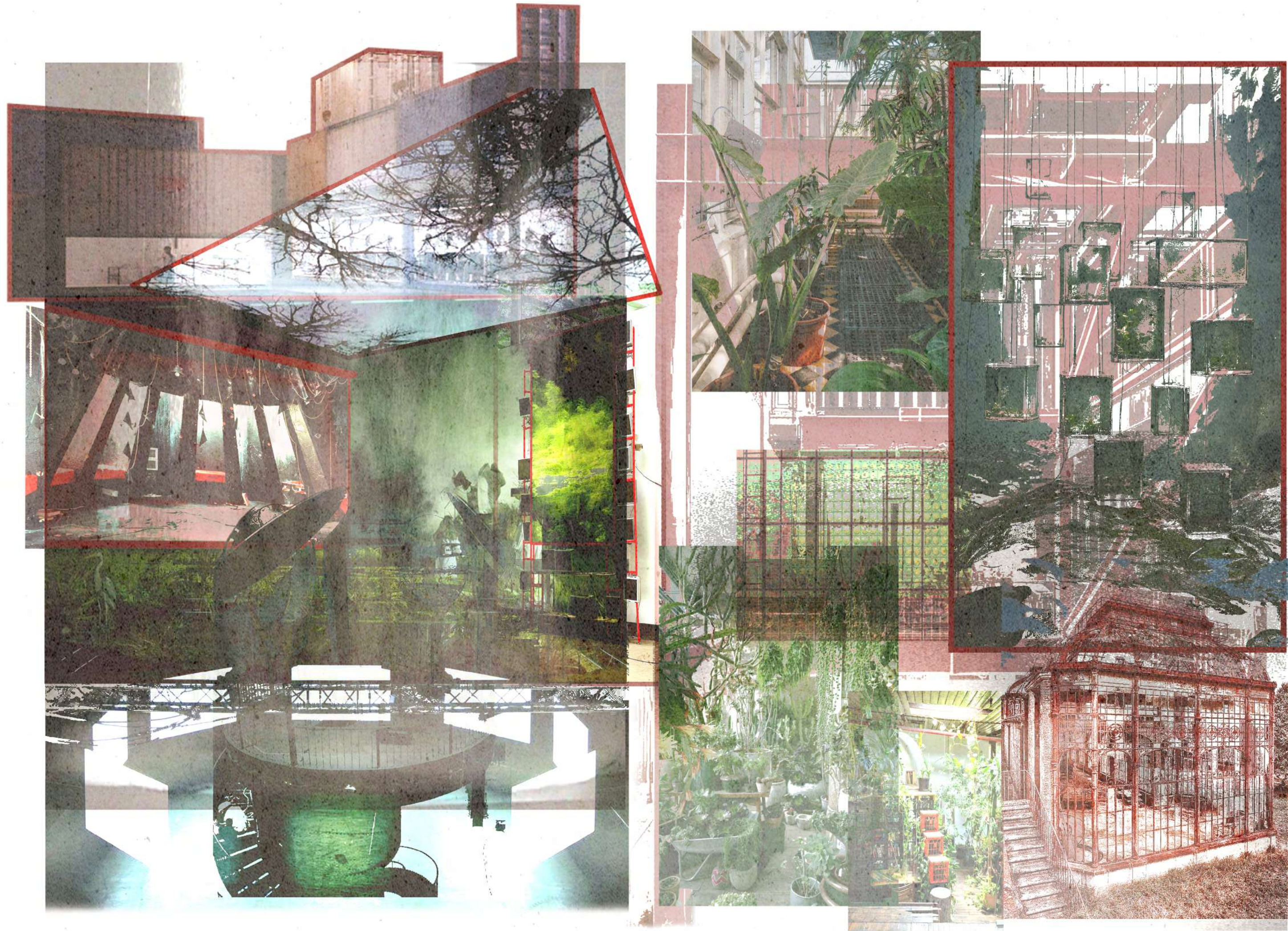
## Step Beyond the Digital Threshold - Rewild Barking's Future through VR.

Our understanding of community is becoming skewed as rapid technological progress increasingly isolates us. Inspired by "Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?", this project revolves around the exchange of knowledge and positive emotions through connections between each other, technology and nature. We have an environment that those in the novel were not so lucky to have, but it is being neglected and destroyed. How can we use advancing technology to our advantage? In this unconventional, non-institutional educational space, young users take part in a VR rewilding programme within the Digital Threshold, reimagining the land once occupied by the Barking Power Stations. The knowledge gained in the virtual world is transmitted to real indoor and outdoor communal gardens that surround the site. By blending virtual rewilding with environmental education, young users cultivate a deeper sense of care and responsibility for their environment.



Key Collage

A final atmospheric collage dividing the digital and physical aspects of the site programmes. This became a key guiding image for the atmosphere, geometries and spatial layout of the entire project. The connection between both programmes is the symbolic exchange of knowledge and emotions, as well as the physical red corten steel.



User Profiles



**Gardener**  
**Role:** Care for plants, maintain beds and engage in workshops through volunteering  
**Ages:** 12-60 – safe for all ages  
**Access Pattern:** Regular drop-in or group sessions and some ongoing maintenance



**VR Technician**  
**Role:** Maintains and operates VR hardware/software, supports users, sets up experiences  
**Ages:** 25-40 – specialised staff  
**Access Pattern:** On-site regularly, typically during opening hours

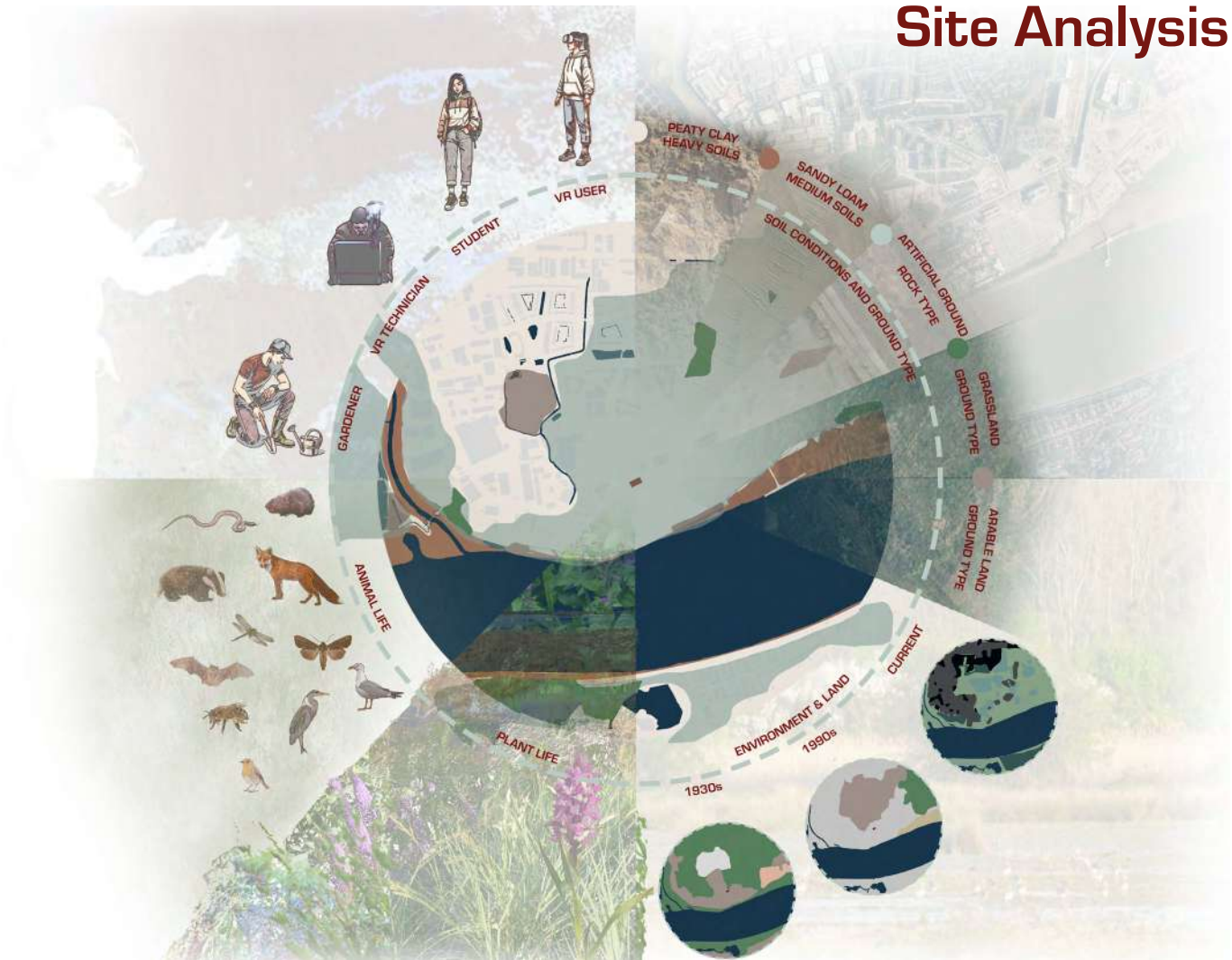


**Student**  
**Role:** Participate in VR sessions and exhibitions, garden maintenance and self-directed exploration  
**Ages:** 16-26 – for younger and mature students  
**Access Pattern:** Programmed activities and regular self-directed drop ins



**VR User**  
**Role:** Engage in immersive learning and VR rewilding programme as well as guest exhibitions  
**Ages:** 15-25 – appropriately aged users  
**Access Pattern:** Scheduled sessions, with regular guest exhibition drop ins

Site Analysis



The proposal aims to increase the local biodiversity in line with the future development plans of Barking Riverside, as well as honour the century-old industrial heritage of the site.

Site Context



The site [84 River Road] is the former control room building for the Barking Power Stations. It stands derelict since the 1980s surrounded by overgrown shrub and discarded shipping containers.

Detailed Site Plan

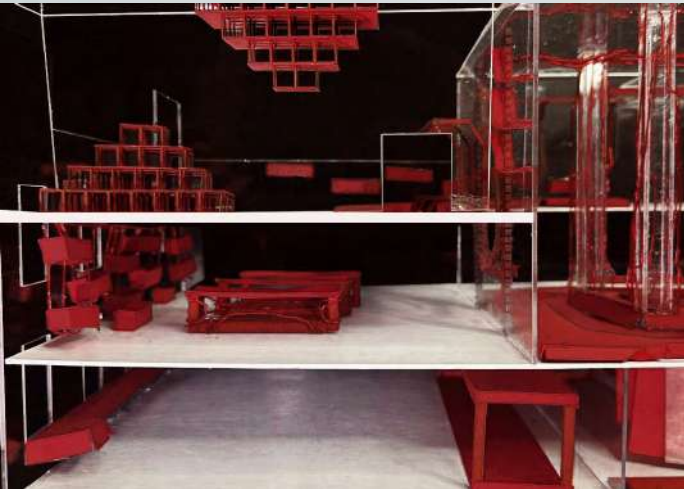
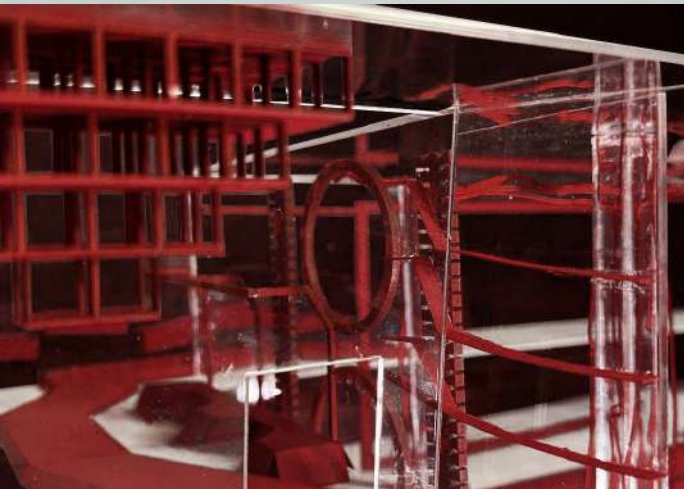


The site is aimed at younger users from local schools and residences. As Barking Riverside continues to expand new residents will enter and will benefit from the project.



# Material Profile

The axonometric diagram highlights the features that utilise repurposed steel. To highlight specific zones, a physical model was constructed using acrylic, MDF, wire, and card.



# Spatial Strategy

As seen in the 1:100 Longitudinal Section, the spatial layout was determined by the sun path, due to the different lighting requirements of the two main programmes. As a result, the VR studios span all floors at the centre, forming a digital core with minimal natural light to optimise studio lighting control. The indoor and outdoor communal gardens surround the space, with larger openings that allow continuous daylight to support plant growth. This arrangement allows users to move through the space comfortably and take part in whichever programme they choose.



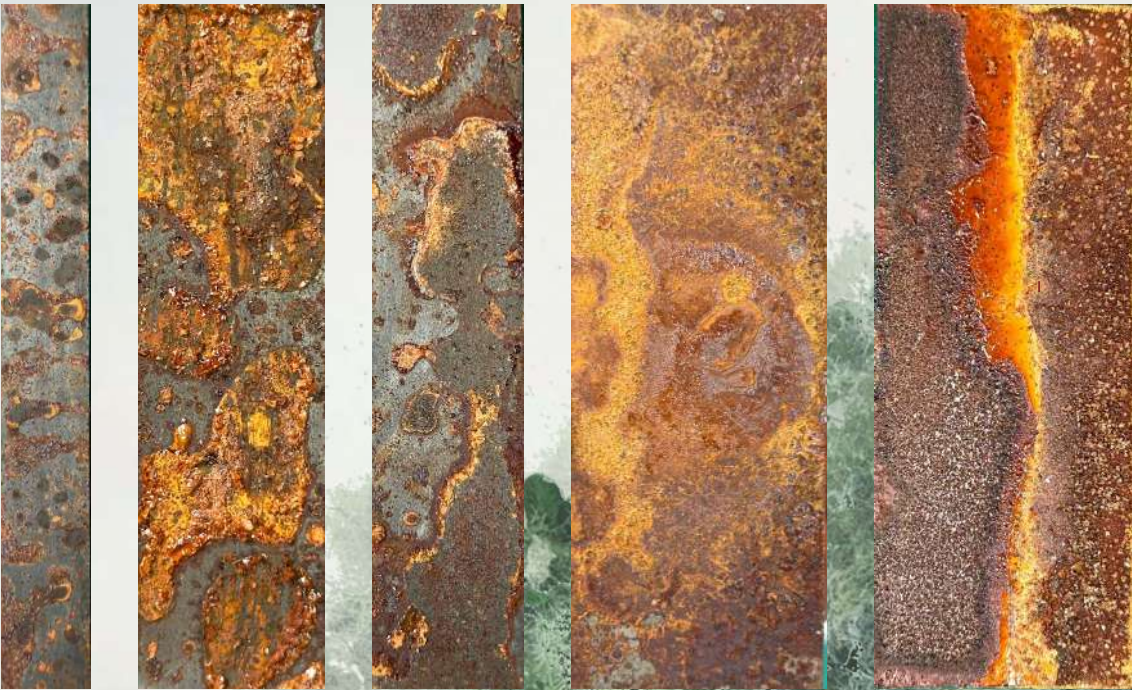
# Repurposing Corten Steel

Corten steel is the key material used throughout the site and across all programme elements. It serves as the physical connection between the digital and physical world by manifesting as small modular geometries and larger structural platforms across the space. The steel is repurposed from the hundreds of discarded shipping containers found around the site, extending towards the River Thames. It is a sustainable choice as it re-uses scrap metal and opens up opportunities for ecological regeneration by removing waste from the site.



# Material Investigations

A series of material investigations explored the natural patina that forms on steel when exposed to weathering. Test pieces were either sprayed or submerged in a solution made of equal parts water, hydrogen peroxide, and white vinegar, with a tablespoon of sea salt. The reaction was almost immediate, but the experiment continued for two weeks to observe the progression of colour and texture. From these tests, it was decided that interior steel will be treated to preserve its finish, while exterior steel will be left to develop a yellow patina, echoing the changes in the surrounding environment.

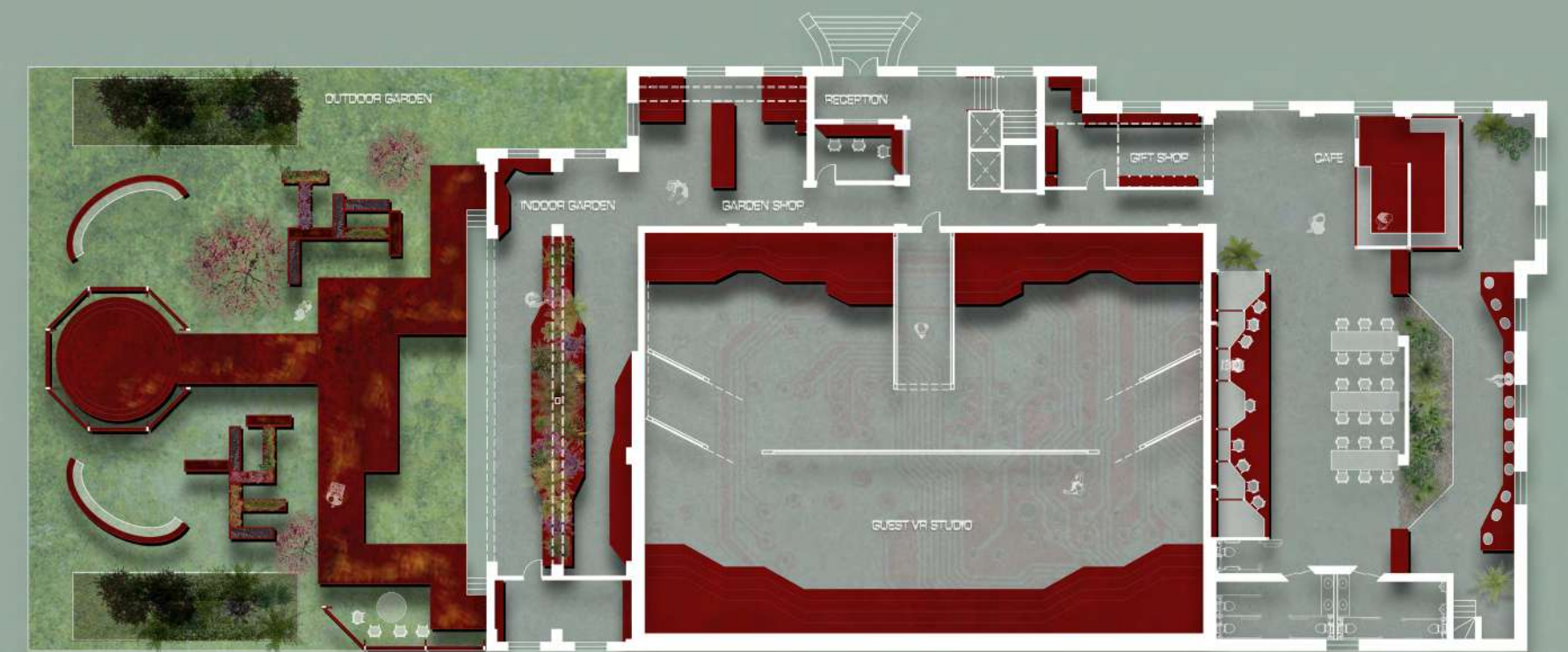






## Ground Floor

This floor features informal spaces that foster connections, including a cafe and the main outdoor garden. Various public guest exhibitions relating to the environment are held in the central studio.



## First Floor

In the former double-height control room, the Digital Threshold hosts the main VR rewinding programme. Inspired by the layout of a motherboard, it serves as the physical and symbolic digital core.

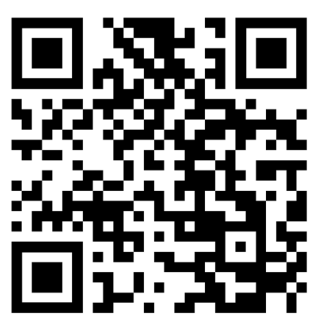


## Second Floor

This floor consists of quieter garden areas for those seeking more calming spaces to relax and stay grounded. The mix of indoor and outdoor environments supports a variety of plant life important for education.







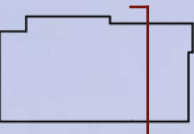
# Video Storyboard

<https://vimeo.com/1081135515>

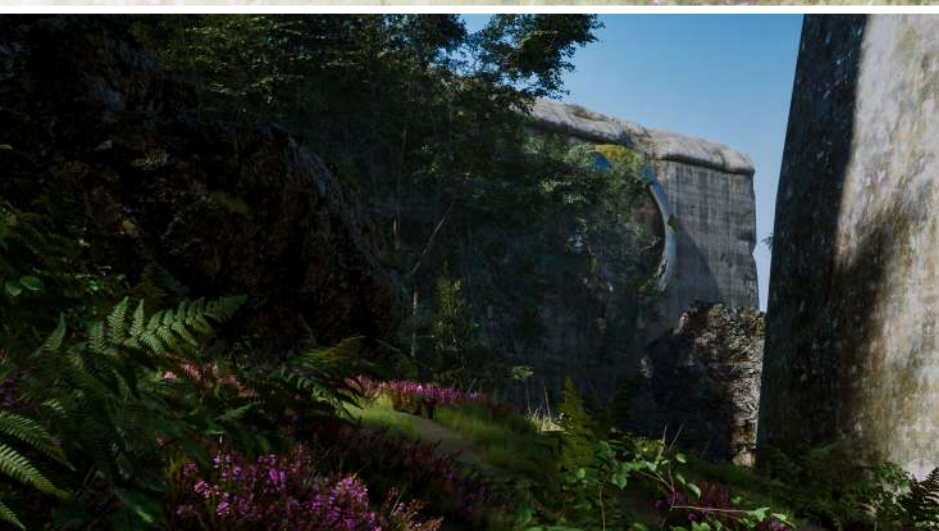
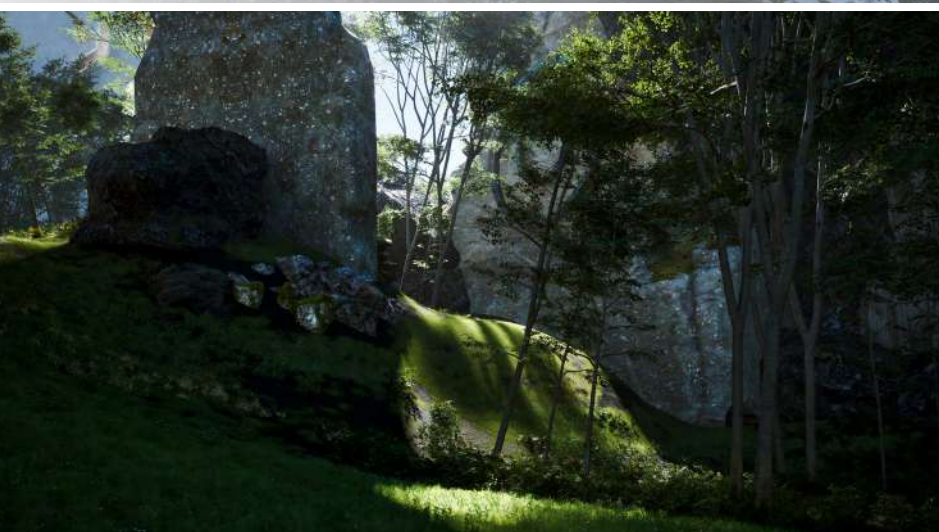
Experience the transmission of knowledge between two worlds...

# VR Rewilding of the Future

The project is highly future driven. The VR rewilding garden will naturally grow and expand as users gain skills in gardening and environmental care. Furthermore, as technology continues to advance, it offers endless possibilities to enhance the digital learning experience. However, growth isn't limited to the virtual world. As users plant and nurture the environment, the outdoor garden will expand naturally, while indoor spaces will flourish with an abundance of greenery. Young users are encouraged to use the developing technology to cultivate a sense of responsibility towards the environment. The knowledge and habits formed through the programme are intended to extend into their personal lives, shaping a more sustainable future for the generations to come.



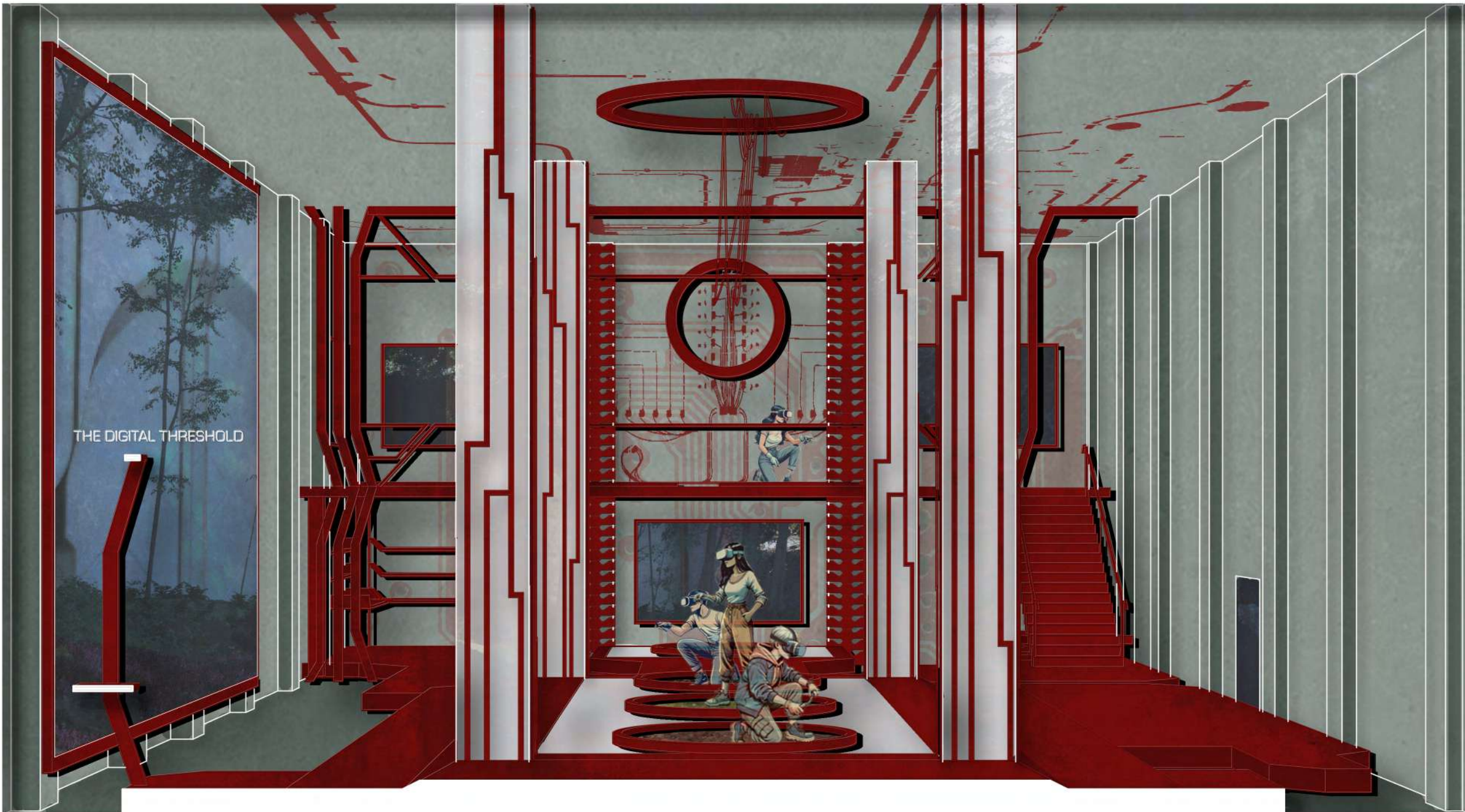
## 1:50 Perspective Section



ROOFTOP GARDEN



GREEN CORRIDOR



THE DIGITAL THRESHOLD



GUEST VR STUDIO