

## THE CONCEPT

This project was created to increase interest in and build awareness in sustainability, while helping to visualise the effects of waste pollution on the environment. The Middle Ground is an educational sustainability centre which consists of two parts, an educational area in the form of an exhibition and a practical area in the form of workshops. It is based in the city centre of Leicester and aimed at people in the age group of 18 to 30.

# Middle Ground



EXHIBITION FLYTHROUGH

## THE ISSUE

In a survey conducted in 2022 (Deloitte, 2022) people in the UK were asked: 'WHAT ARE THE MAIN OBSTACLES TO PURSUING A SUSTAINABLE LIFESTYLE?'



52% said it's too expensive



51% said they lack interest in sustainability



48% said they lack in information about sustainability

## EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The project aims to overcome the biggest problem in terms of sustainability, which is **the lack of information and interest**. An interactive exhibition and practical workshops and activities have been designed for this purpose.

*'Don't waste electricity; don't waste paper; don't waste food. Live the way you want to live but just don't waste. Look after the natural world and the animals in it and the plants in it too. This is their planet as well as ours. DON'T WASTE THEM.'*

David Attenborough

# 01

THE EXHIBITION, which is made up of five different parts:

- THE PLASTIC ROOM
- THE BALL PIT
- THE UNDERWATER EXPERIENCE
- THE OIL ROOM
- THE WASTE ROOM



THE UNDERWATER EXPERIENCE

aims to show in an interactive way how much our everyday consumer decisions affect the environment. It ranges from the amount of plastic and micro-plastic that surrounds us, to the impact on the ocean caused by our household waste and disasters caused by the over-exploitation of natural resources, to the amount of waste produced on average by each of us in just one month. Through its appearance and sensory design, the exhibition becomes easier to remember and encourages people to spread the message about it.



THE WASTE ROOM



THE WORKSHOP

# 02

Through **THE WORKSHOPS**, visitors have the opportunity to receive information about sustainability and how to change their daily habits to be more environmentally friendly. The learning area consists of spaces for both hands-on learning and discussion. Situated in a separate part of the building with a direct entrance, the learning area invites visitors to explore it more often, with its school-like functionality.



## THE LOCATION



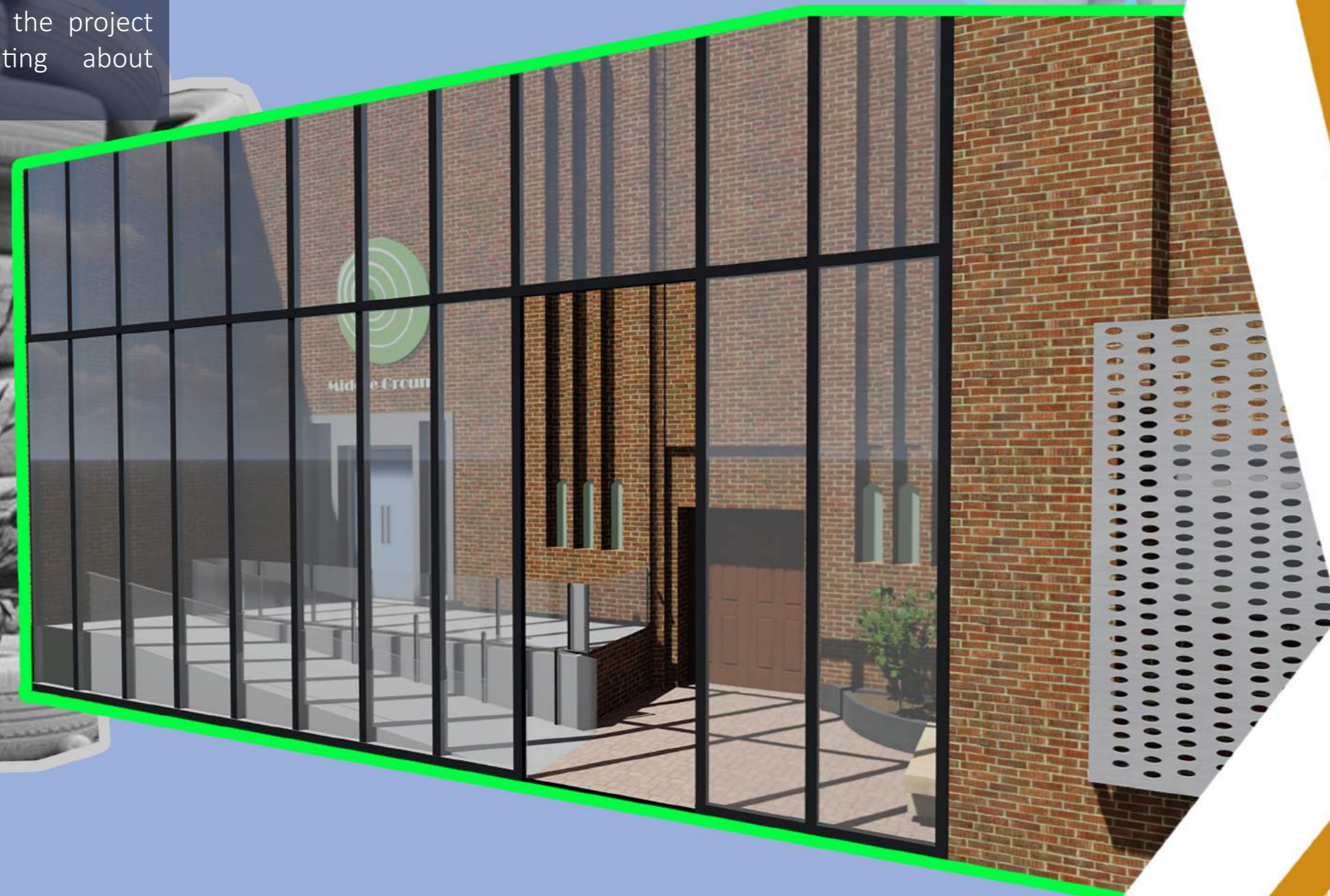
Leicester is an hour's drive from cities such as Birmingham and Nottingham and less than two hours drive from London. The building is located in the city center, exactly in the historical quarter, which gives access to many museums and exhibitions. Its located right next to Leicester's Cathedral, which is often visited by tourists. It is close to the Highcross and Haymarket shopping malls, as well as many restaurants and cafes. The building is situated on the edge of Jubilee's Square, an open public space, which often holds different attractions and celebrations. On an everyday basis, it's a meeting point, where people spend time together.

## DESIGN PLAN

Main measures taken to ensure that the project achieves its objective of educating about sustainability.

**A** Make the exhibition appealing to target audience by modernising the building, while working with the constrains of a Grade II listed building

**B** Use of sustainable materials and solutions that are equally part of the intention to educate about the changing of habits



THE EXTERIOR

## THE HISTORY

The history of this grade II listed building dates back to the sixteenth century, where a hospital stood in its place. From 1876-1976, it served as the Wyggeston Grammar School for Boys, attended by boys from 11 to 16 years old. One of the school's students was David Attenborough, closely associated with environmental protection. Restoring the educational unit to the building would mean restoring it to its first function and the youthful energy that had surrounded the building for many years. Designing an exhibition about the protection of the environment in this building is connected with symbolism, where something old can be transformed into something new and useful.



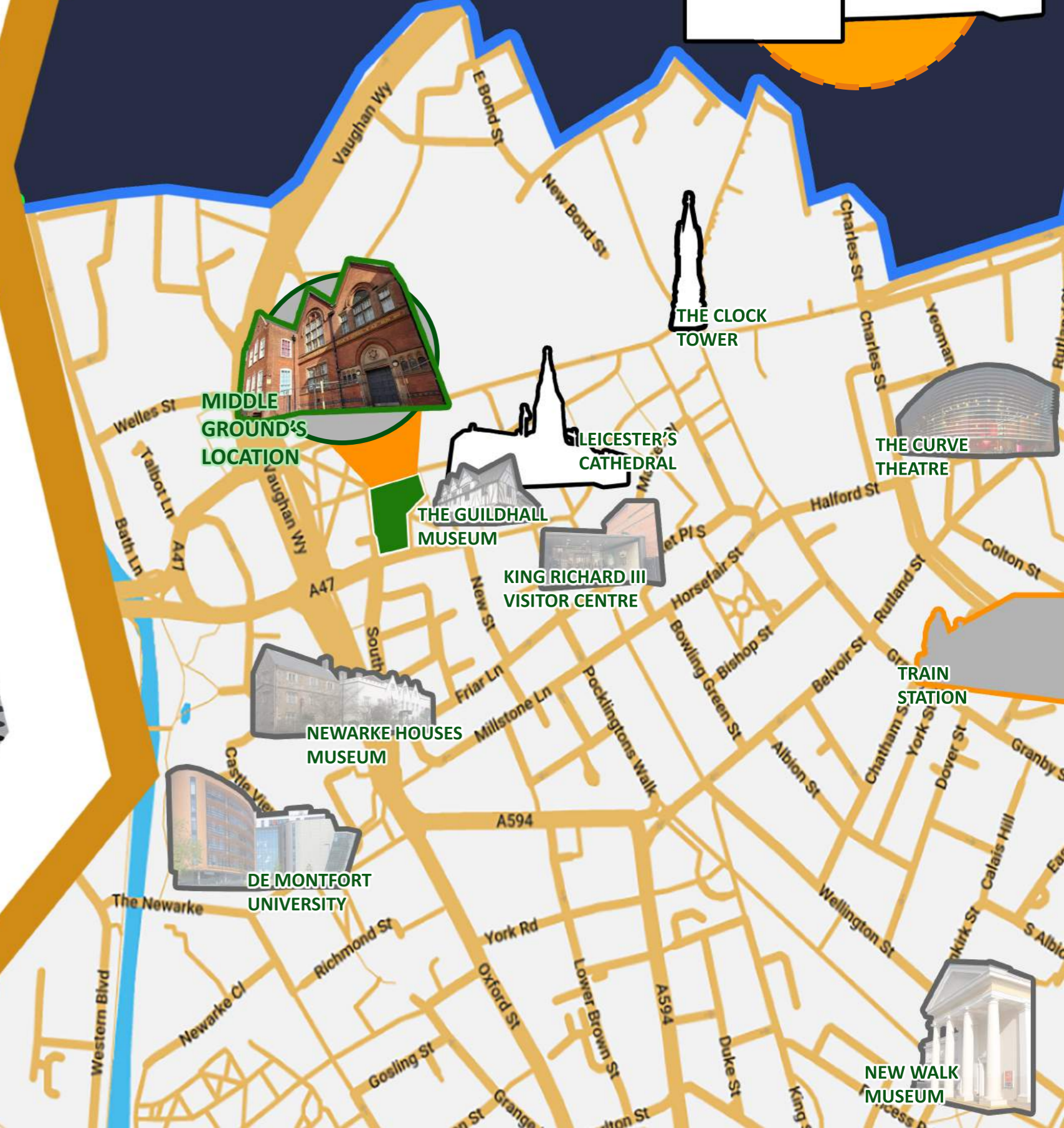
## THE SITE ADVANTAGES

Working with a Grade II listed building, allowed to use what already exist as well as create a link with the history of the building, which previously served as an educational institution.



Located on the edge of the city centre and the De Montfort University campus, the area is frequently visited by young people, falling into the target age group.

Located in the historic quarter, the area is popular with people visiting Leicester. With a variety of exhibitions and museums, the area attracts people of all ages.



NEW WALK MUSEUM





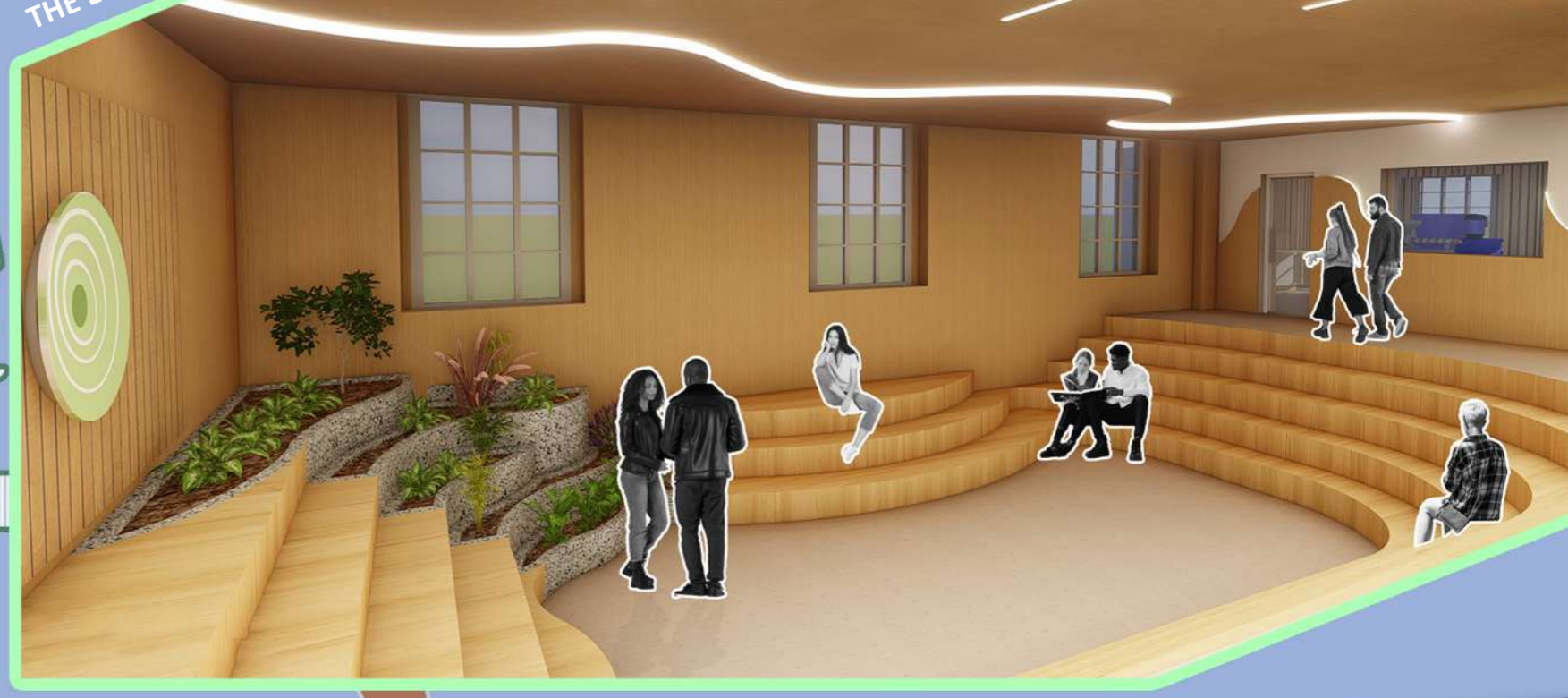
DO IT YOURSELF

THE LEARNING AREA



THE OIL ROOM

The aim of the exhibition is to communicate what happens on the other side of the choices we make every day. Through the use of design that affects the senses, the exhibition becomes easier to remember, the more the information it conveys. Visitors have the opportunity not only to see or touch the exhibition, but at the same time to hear sounds from the surroundings or smell scents evoking different scenarios. This makes it easier to integrate with the



CREATE CHANGE

“Bringing nature into the classroom can kindle a fascination and passion for the diversity of life on earth and can motivate a sense of responsibility to safeguard it.”

David Attenborough



THE PLASTIC ROOM

The exhibition carries information and messages mainly through symbols and metaphors integrated in the design process. The colourful and friendly design changes meaning once it is understood that the chosen materials and shapes represent the surrounding plastic. Appearance plays an important role, as it encourages people to take photos, which in turn will be added to social media accounts, thus encouraging further interested people to visit the exhibition, thus increasing the reach of all those who learn about sustainability.



THE BALL PIT



THE BOOTHS

A major part of the project focuses on offering information about sustainability through workshops and classes. This gives visitors the opportunity to take in information in a practical way. The space offers space for both group learning and individual learning. What's more, with a space suitable for working, the site encourages research and study about new ways of approaching sustainability.





# THE PLANS

1



Because the building is Grade II listed and because of its previous use for a school, its layout was complicated and consisted of many different floor heights within one level. This resulted in the building having to be divided into two parts, thus separating the exhibition from the workshops.

## Changes applied to make exhibition more successful

- A** Two extensions were attached to the building, the first to allow a dedicated space for The Oil Room and the second to create an accessible entrance for the exhibition
- B** Using what already existed, the other exhibitions were designed to fit the spaces
- C** Using the height and size of the room to design an exhibition that highlights the contrast between the amount of waste we create and the average human size
- D** Using the existing layout of the building to create a linear way of visiting the exhibition



## Learning area facilities

- a** The workshops, located in a separate part of the building, allow for use on a school basis
- b** Open space encouraging group discussions and lectures by guest speakers
- c** Workshops provided with equipment that allows you to experiment and create
- d** Booths allowing for learning in smaller groups or independently
- e** Classrooms enabling themed activities

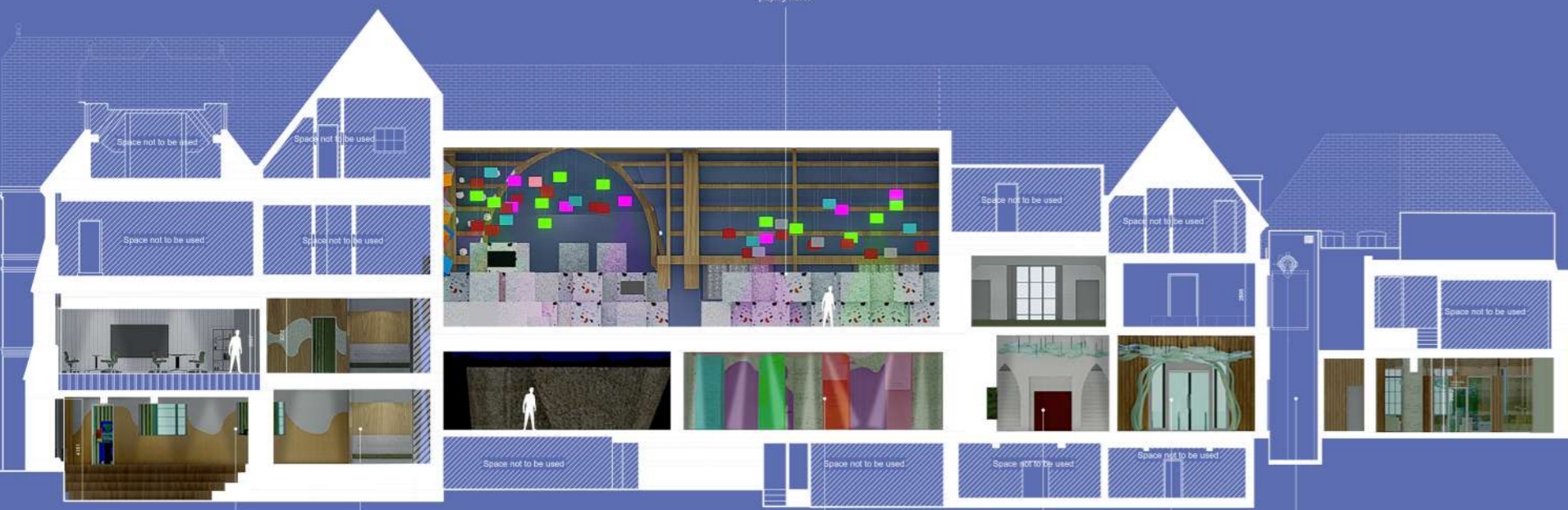


## ORDER OF EXPLORING THE EXHIBITION

1. Main entrance to exhibition
2. Entrance to The Plastic Room
3. The Plastic Room
4. The Ball Pit
5. Introduction area for The Underwater Experience
6. Mapping projection area
7. The tanks
8. The Oil Room
9. Staircase leading to The Waste Room
10. Entrance to The Waste Room
11. The Waste Room introduction area
12. The Waste Room
13. Central staircase leading to the ground floor and its facilities

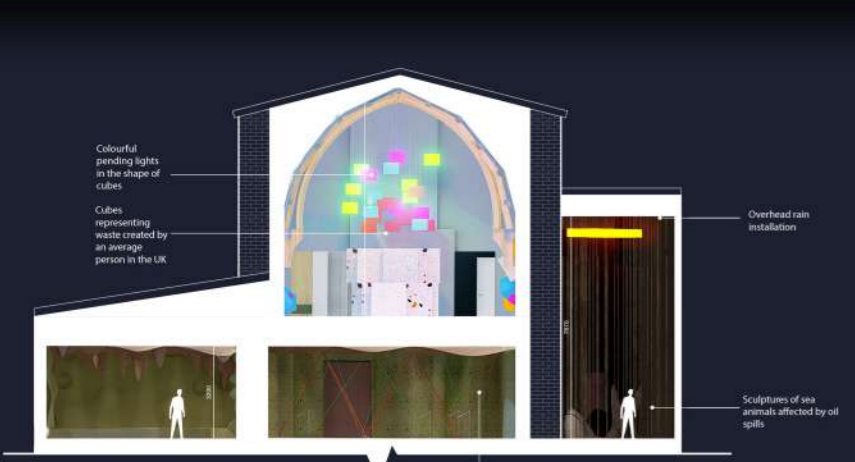
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SECTION AA

Interior windows allowing for people participating in the workshops  
 Booths for group or individual study  
 Plastic sheets are see-through making wall structures visible behind the plastic  
 Main entrance  
 Entrance for visitors using ramps built to provide access to wheelchair users as there is a height difference of 200mm between the street and the building  
 Elevator



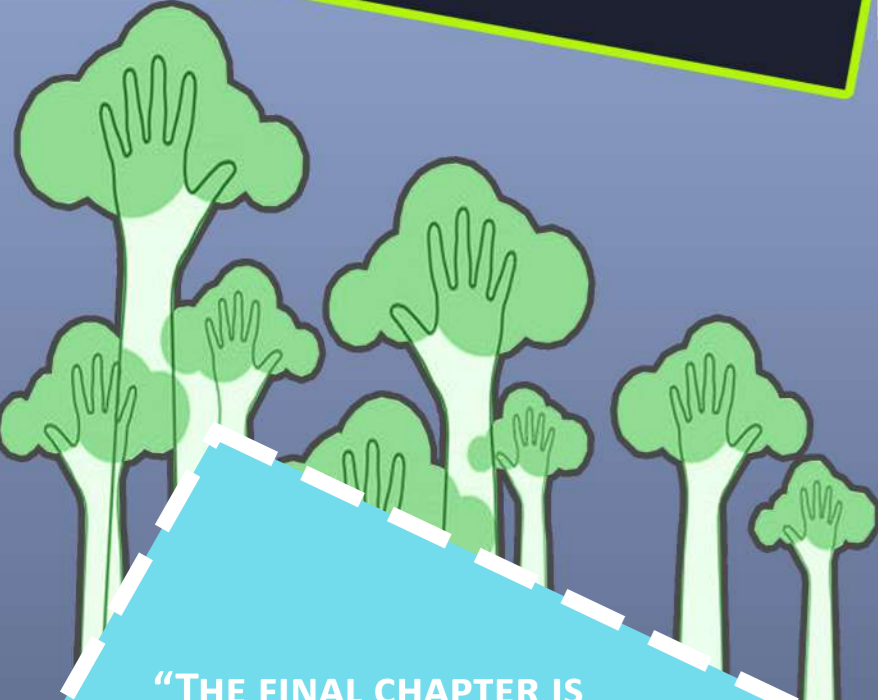
SECTION BB

Colourful pendant lights in the shape of cubes  
 Cubes representing waste created by an average person in the UK  
 Overhead rain installation  
 Sculptures of sea animals affected by oil spills  
 Plastic sheets that can be used as a bench handle



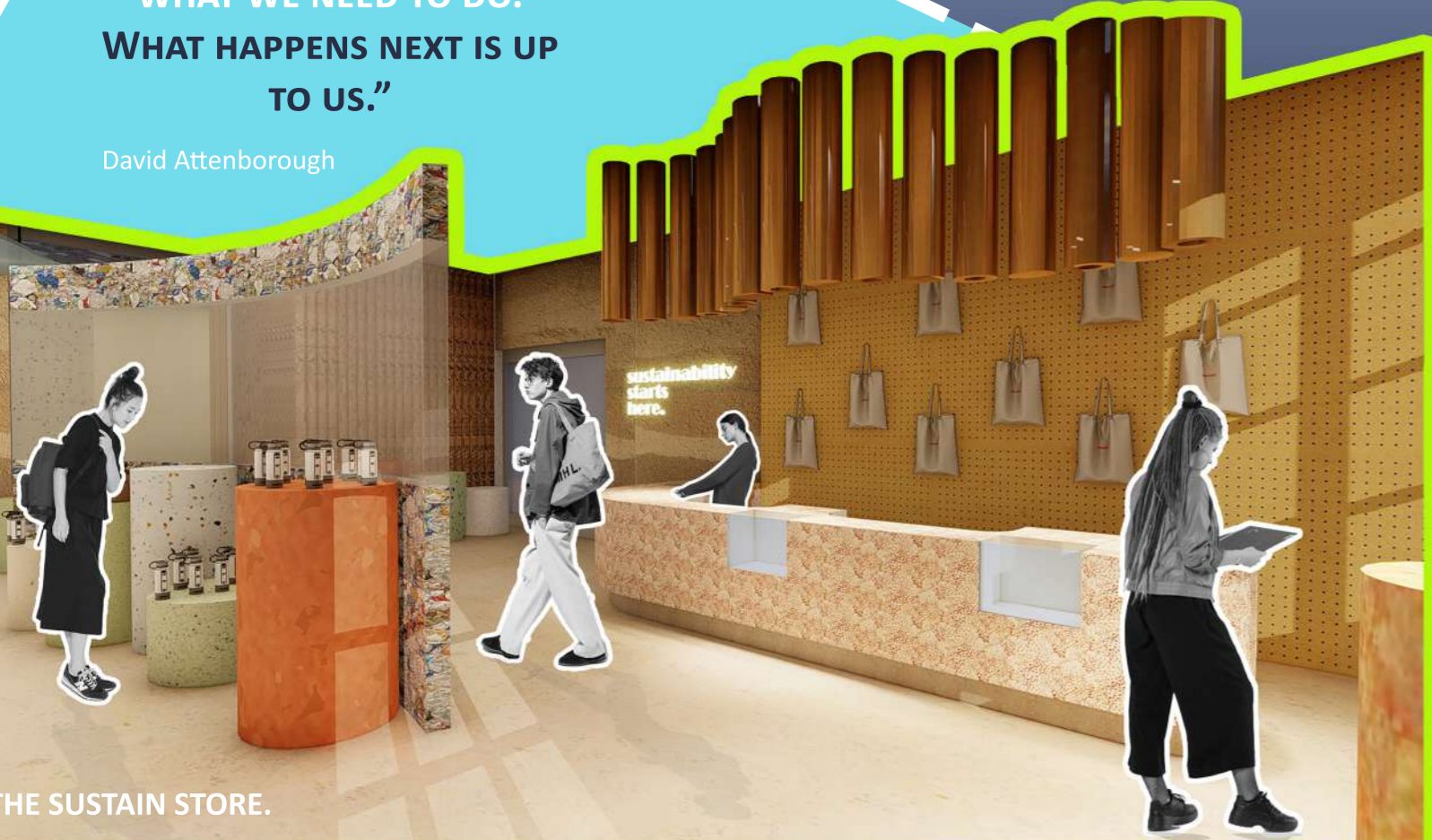
FINISHES

As the project is focusing on the effects of people's ways of living on the environment, the finishes used come from sustainable sources, are recycled or can be recycled. The use of sustainable materials is a proof that many solutions are available and can be applied for different purposes. The finishes used in The Plastic Room, The Ball Pit and The Waste Room are made from post-industrial plastic waste. Their colours show the variety and amounts of produced waste and therefore are great representatives of it in the design.



**"THE FINAL CHAPTER IS OURS TO WRITE. WE KNOW WHAT WE NEED TO DO. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT IS UP TO US."**

David Attenborough



THE SUSTAIN STORE.

SUSTAIN STORE.

The third and the last part of the project is the Sustain Store. The sustainable store will not only sell items that will help change a person's lifestyle to a more natural one, but will also educate and offer information about materials and finishes that are made of recycled materials or that can be easily reused. The appearance of the store matches the exhibition. The product display is organic and made of the same materials as the exhibition. In the middle sits a tall installation made of cans and bottles, representing what customers part with when they buy a reusable product.

SOURCING ELECTRICITY

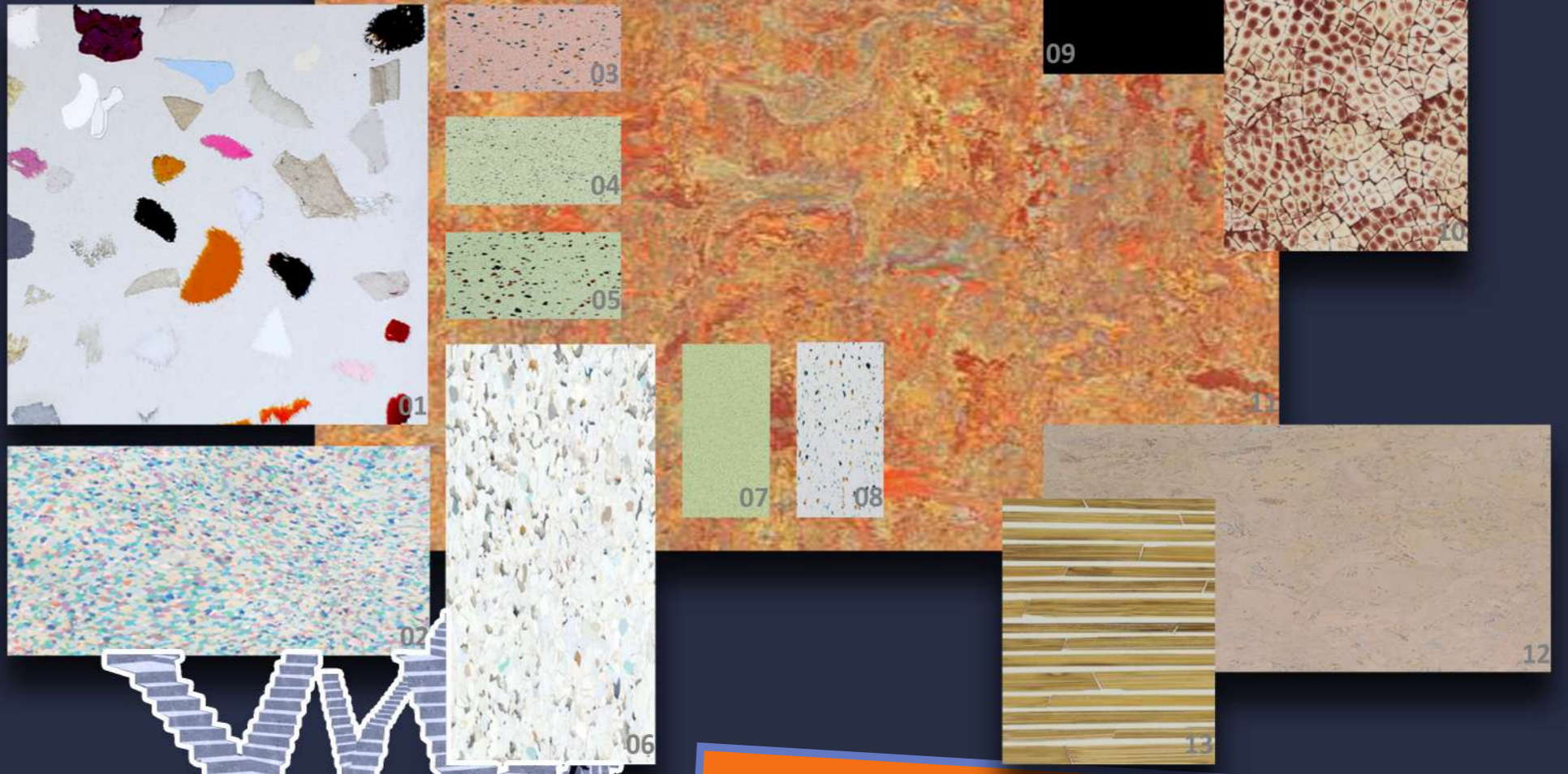
One of the power sources for the exhibition, are the Pavegen tiles in the entrance. These are kinetic tiles, which generate electricity when stepped on. It is an interesting addition to the space and at the same time a way for producing clean energy.



THE ENTRANCE

MATERIAL BOARD

SUSTAINABLE



**01 PLASTICIET Rhinestone 2.0:** Panel made from recycled post-industrial plastic, used to represent the amount of created waste. **02 PLASTICIET Chocolate Factory.** **03 DURAT Gin Daisy:** Panel made from post-industrial plastic, used to represent micro-plastic. **04 DURAT 830.** **05 DURAT Midori Sour.** **06 PLASTICIET Ivory 2.0.** **07 DURAT 610.** **08 DURAT Martini.** **09 SPLASHBACKS Black Glass Splashback:** durable and water-resistant, used as a reflective wall surface in The Oil Room, making the space look bigger. **10 NATURESQUARED Eggshell Snakeskin Burgundy Finish:** eggshells coming from food waste, used to represent the variety of sustainable finishes available. **11 MARMOLEUM Asian Tiger:** Carbon neutral linoleum, made partly from recycled materials, used to represent an oil spill in The Oil Room. **12 CORKFLOOR Standard Creme:** used in The Underwater Experience to represent the sand bottom of the sea. **13 NATURESQUARED White Bamboo Strips:** used in The Sustain Store, as it is known as one of the most sustainable material.

