

Last of Us: Part II
Urban Ruin (v2.0)
(Mock Level)

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Preliminary Research

Design Pattern Analysis

Using Nature Overgrowth as a Wayfinding Element & Emotional Catharsis



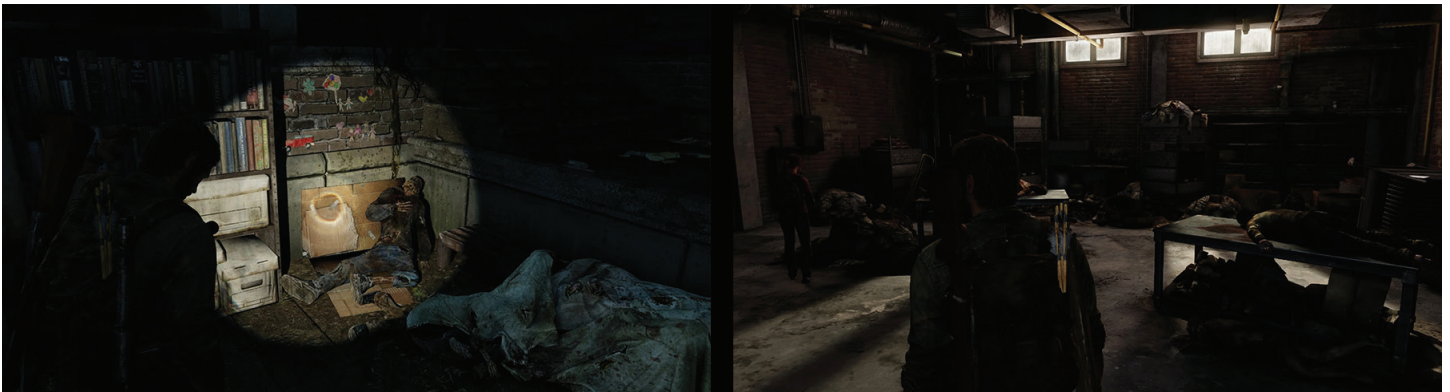
Using Dilapidated Architecture as Interesting Paths



Using Environment Framing to Tease the Goal



Using Visual Composition and Prop Placement to Elicit Environmental Storytelling



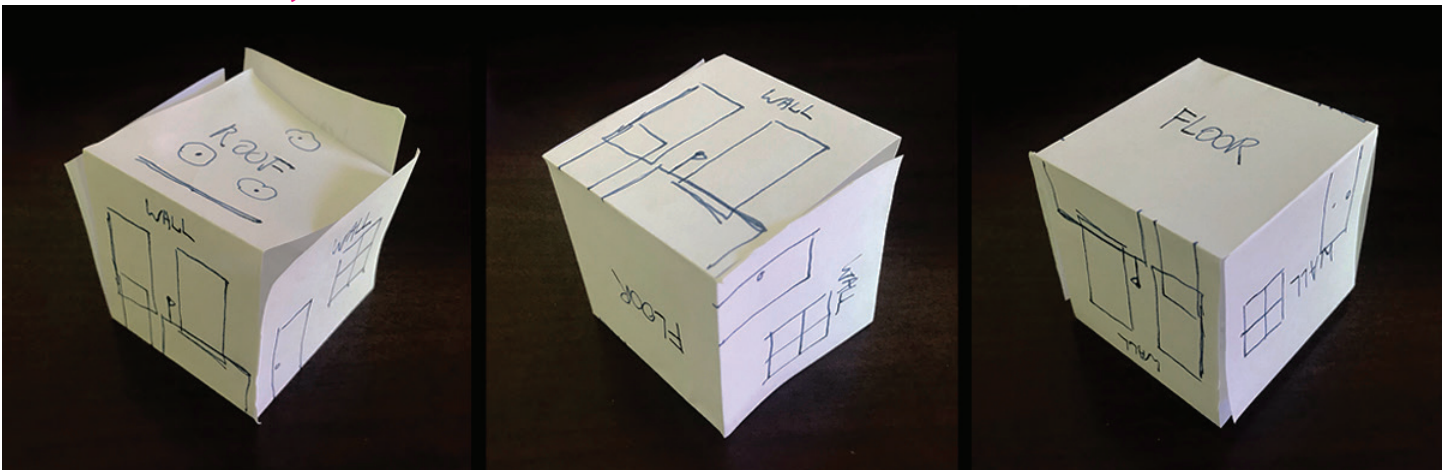
Preliminary Research

Reference Images & Brainstorming

Toppled and Dilapidated Building Structures



Plane Orientation Study Cube



Playtest Feedback

Design Problems & Potential Solutions

1) Adjust the First Beat to better pace out reveals and goals

Problem

- The parking garage, the bank landmark, and the waterfall is all revealed at once. There is no sense of surprise / discovery.

Potential Solution(s)

- Curve the street slightly to occlude a direct line of sight down the street.
- Move the parking structure slightly away from the street as to not be so prominent.
- Tone down the colour of the collapsed building (currently white) so that it doesn't visually stand out so much.
- Adjust the terrain / prop placement (ex. the school bus) to first direct and draw the player's interest towards the waterfall / sinkhole, not the parking structure.
- Move the inciting incident (The hanging body) closer to the forested area to space out the elements that are revealed.

2) Consider an alternative to the hanging body to accomplish the feeling of surprise, tension, and dread.

Problem

- It's basically the same thing as the demo. (unoriginal)

Potential Solution(s)

- Spiky, hazardous sets of barricades blocking direct entry into the city (or barbed wire)
- Bloody rags and clothes scattered around the ground.
- A vehicle that has been previously identified as the marauders' in one of previous chapters.
- Skeletons crushed under cracked pavements.
- A Skeleton nailed onto a tree as the marauder's mark of territory.

3) Use the encounter with the marauder encampment to build mystery / danger. Assume that they have been occupied recently, but currently abandoned.

Problem

- The space feels a bit too open and the player can see everything, hence the player doesn't feel vulnerable to the unknown danger.
- It is not immediately clear who occupied the campsite and why they've left.

Potential Solution(s)

- Make the parking structure more dilapidated as to reflect the collapsed building's crushing impact, while also using the debris to create more claustrophobic space. (more like a cave of concrete)
- Place a barrel with faint smoke to suggest that somebody's been here recently.
- A room with a cage door, where the player discovers one of Tommy's artefacts in the cage cell to suggest that he was held here once (ex. a pair of shoe, necklace)

Design Feedback

Problems & Potential Solutions

4) Redesign the initial parts of the collapsed building. After a room or two, introduce a co-operative puzzle that utilizes Ellie's characteristics and abilities.

Problem

- Dead residents throughout the building may be too much / out of place in relation to the core narrative beats. Get rid of them and focus more on interesting traversal paths.
- The existing traversal challenges seem too easy and doesn't take advantage of the building's collapsed state.
- There needs to be a collaborative puzzle to make Joel interact with Ellie. (And be reminded of her value / skills)

Potential Solution(s)

- A corridor where the building facade has been blown out, revealing the fall to the sinkhole beneath. The player must detour via an apartment to cross the opening, however it is found that the door to the unit is locked. Here, the player can boost Ellie up into a small opening in the wall nearby the fall to the death. Ellie unlocks the door from the inside, and the door swings outwards, allowing Joel to climb it up and re-join Ellie.

5) Adjust the Second Beat to address the potential "Run to the exit" scenario.

Problem

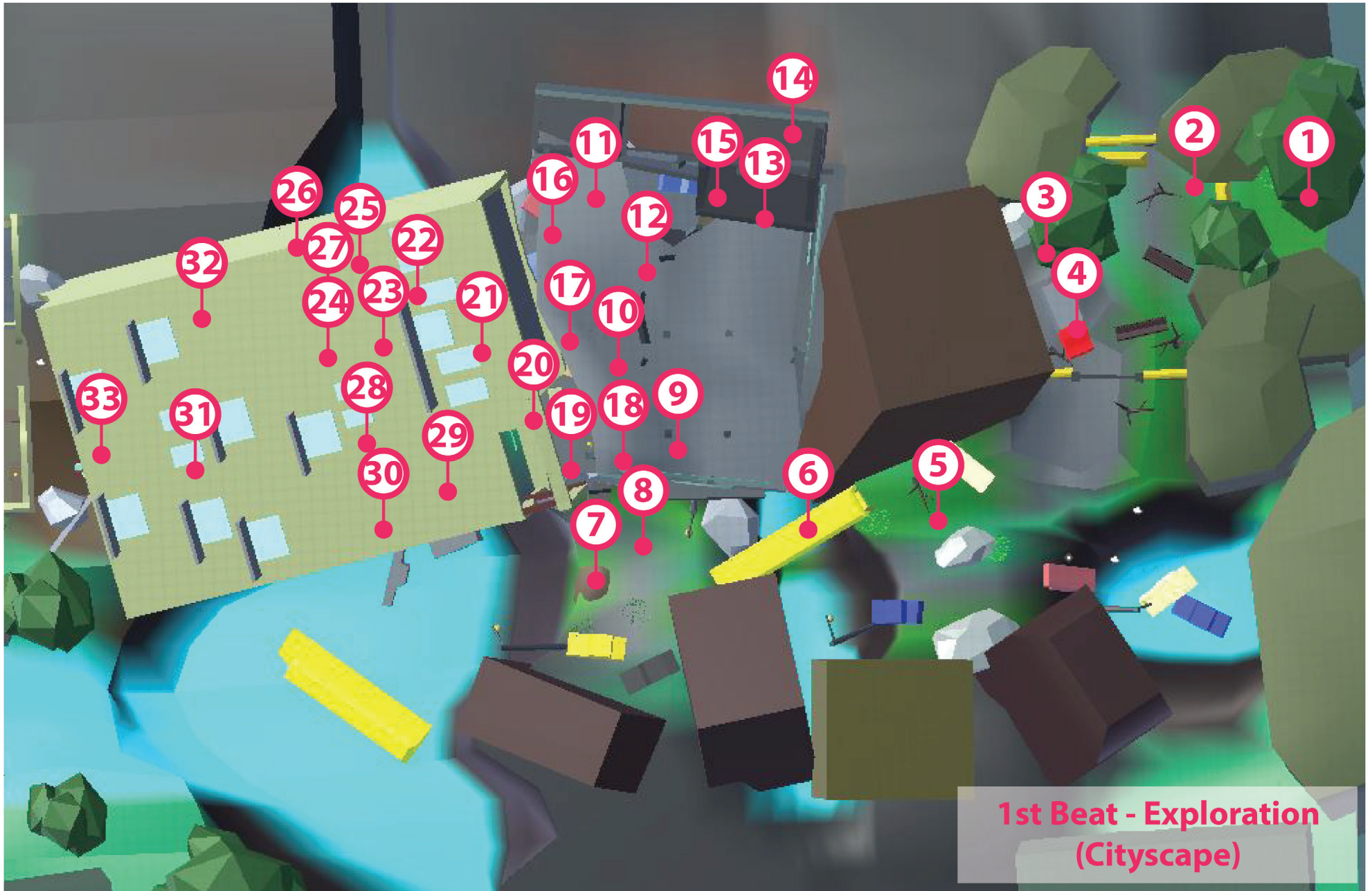
- It is immediately clear that the left flanking route (the forested area) is the shortest and the safest path to the exit.
- The forest area is too attractive - how to make it less inviting?
- It is too easy for the player to reach the exit point just by frantically running away from the enemies through the battlefield.
- Again, everything is too visible to the player when they first enter the combat area, hence no sense of surprise.

Potential Solution(s)

- Make a one-way exit from the collapsed building as a significant drop (to isolate the combat space)
- Occlude the line of sight into the courtyard with higher walls, and only revealed when the player move around it and enters the white building.
- Change the wall geometry to frame more the right side of the courtyard, and less of the forested area.
- Make the forested area feel less sheltered, with rocks / bushes / collapsed trees to make traversal more challenging.
- Alter the terrain to be more irregular as to disorient the player.
- Move the exit opening away from the forested area, and elevated so that it requires a fair amount of climbing.

1st Beat - City Streets and Buildings

Overview Map



1st Beat - City Streets and Buildings

Traversal & Exploration



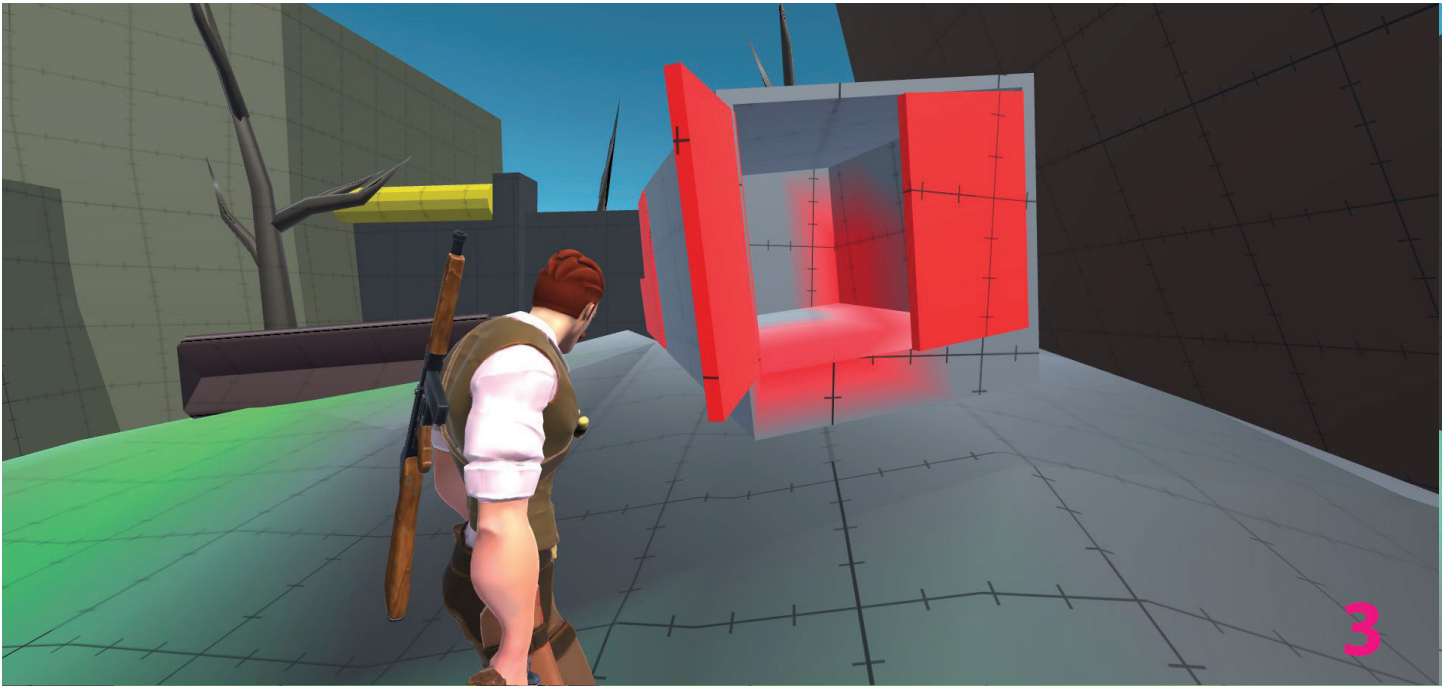
1. The Player walks through the forest and encounters a man-made barricade obstructing the path. The Player jumps over it to proceed (Start of 1st Beat).



2. Coming out into a clearing, the Player sees ahead a fortified areas with barricades and the truck that the Marauders were seen using to transport Tommy in a previous chapter.

1st Beat - City Streets and Buildings

Traversal & Exploration



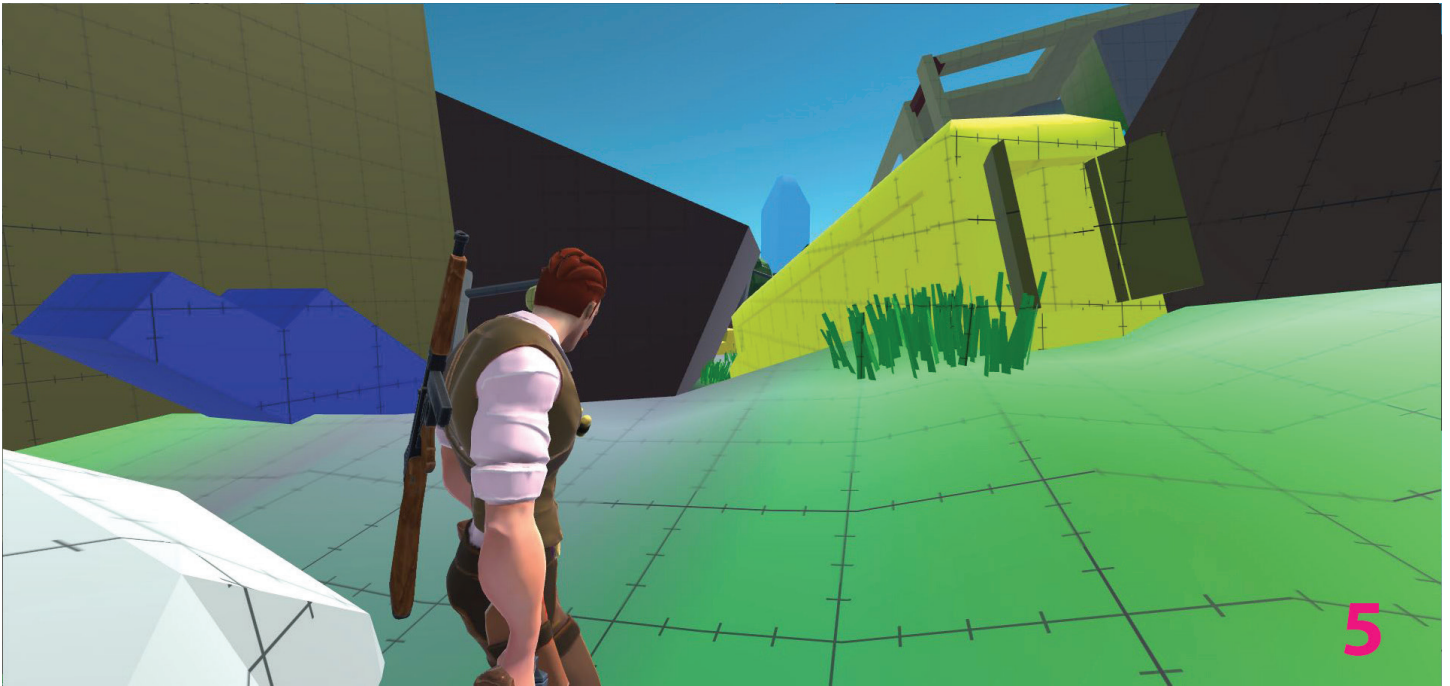
3. As the Player approaches the truck to examine it, dried smears of blood are seen on the inner walls of the truck, suggesting that Tommy had been worked up badly.



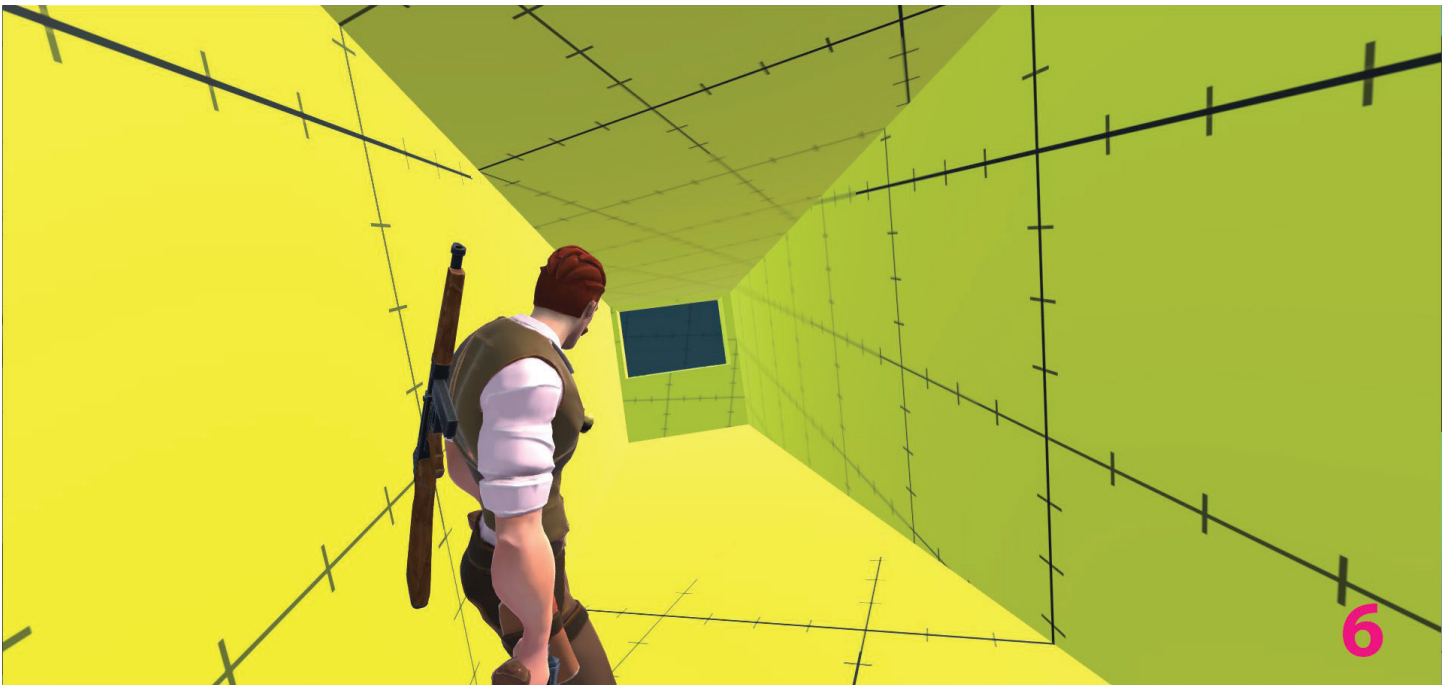
4. The Player is blocked by a high, fortified wall that is beyond climable height. Here, the Player uses the truck as an elevated platform to scale over it.

1st Beat - City Streets and Buildings

Traversal & Exploration



5. As the Player walks down the undulating city street, the Bank building is seen ahead. The Player here is blocked by a steep drop.



6. The Player climbs into a school bus straddling the cliff edges and uses it as a bridge to get across. At the far end of the bus, the Player punches out the front window to exit the vehicle.

1st Beat - City Streets and Buildings

Traversal & Exploration



7. Upon exiting, the Player discovers a waterfall feeding into a huge sinkhole in the street. On the right, there can also be seen a building that seems to have collapsed over the opening.



8. Blocked by the sharp drop, the Player turns around and sees that the collapsed building is resting on the parking structure. The Player sees an entrance into the parking structure.

1st Beat - City Streets and Buildings

Traversal & Exploration



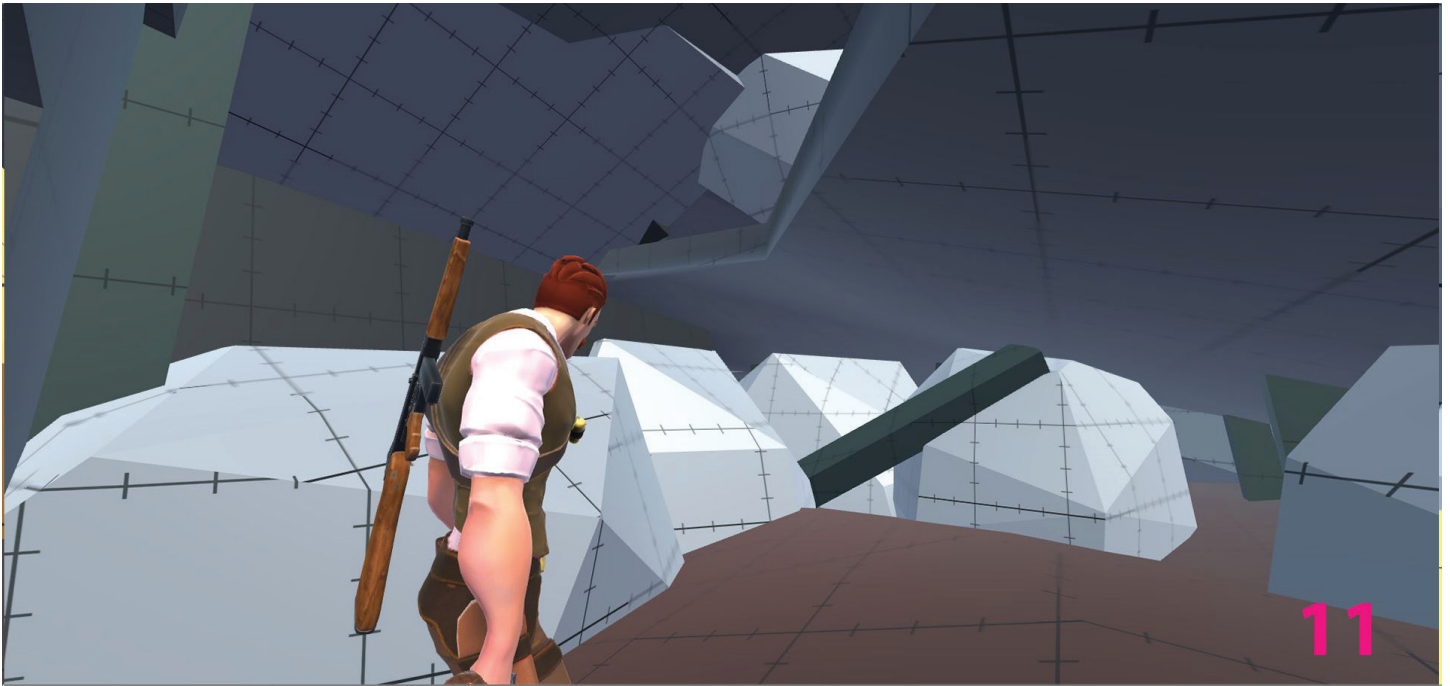
9. The Player makes way through the concrete cave of the parking structure and sees ahead a barrel with a faint smoke rising out of it. Here, it is intended to suggest human presence.



10. The Player approaches the barrel, whose fire has clearly been put out recently. From here, the Player proceeds with caution, alerted by the possibility of marauders being nearby.

1st Beat - City Streets and Buildings

Traversal & Exploration



11. The path ahead is blocked by a collapsed concrete column. Here, the Player and Ellie work together to lift and remove the obstacle to proceed.



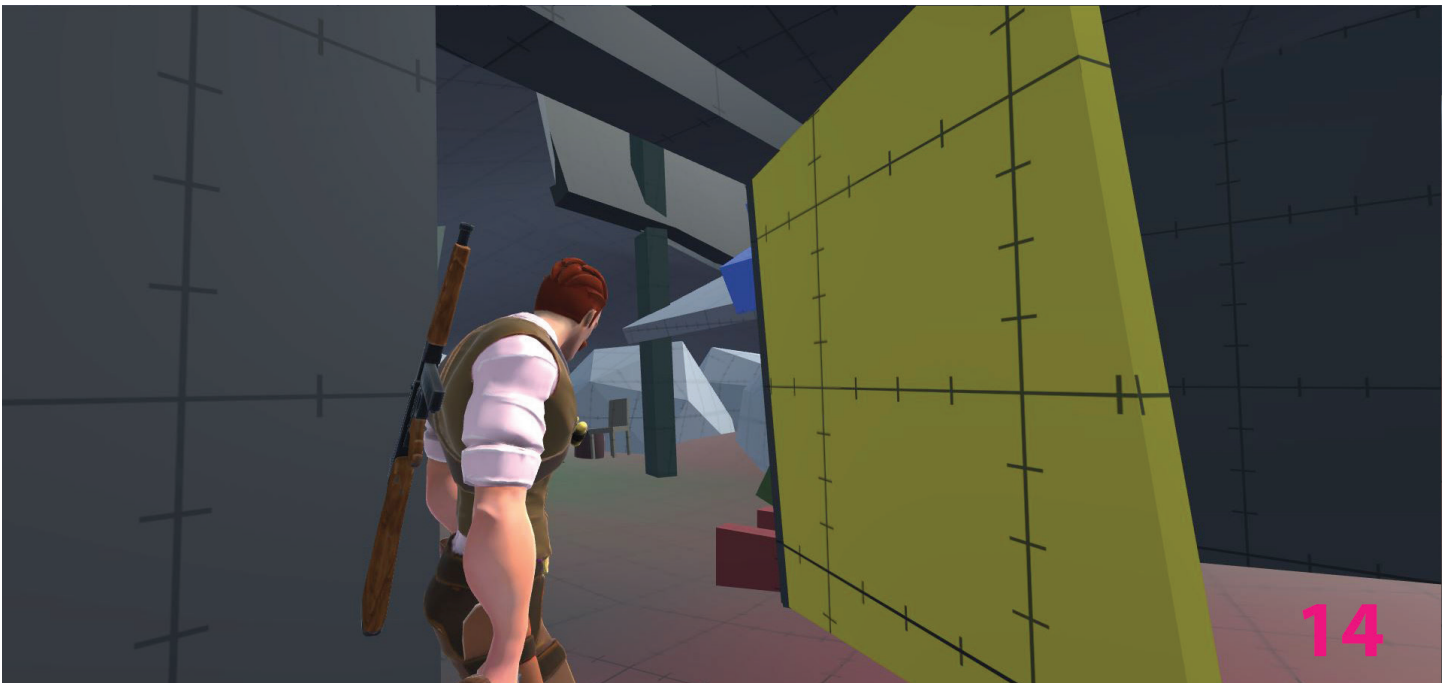
12. The Player comes out into a clearing where marauders have clearly been using as an encampment. To the left the Player sees a closed yellow door.

1st Beat - City Streets and Buildings

Traversal & Exploration



13. The Player interacts with the yellow door to open it. Inside, more dried blood is found smeared across the floor. The Player discovers Tommy's artefact placed on a garbage cart.



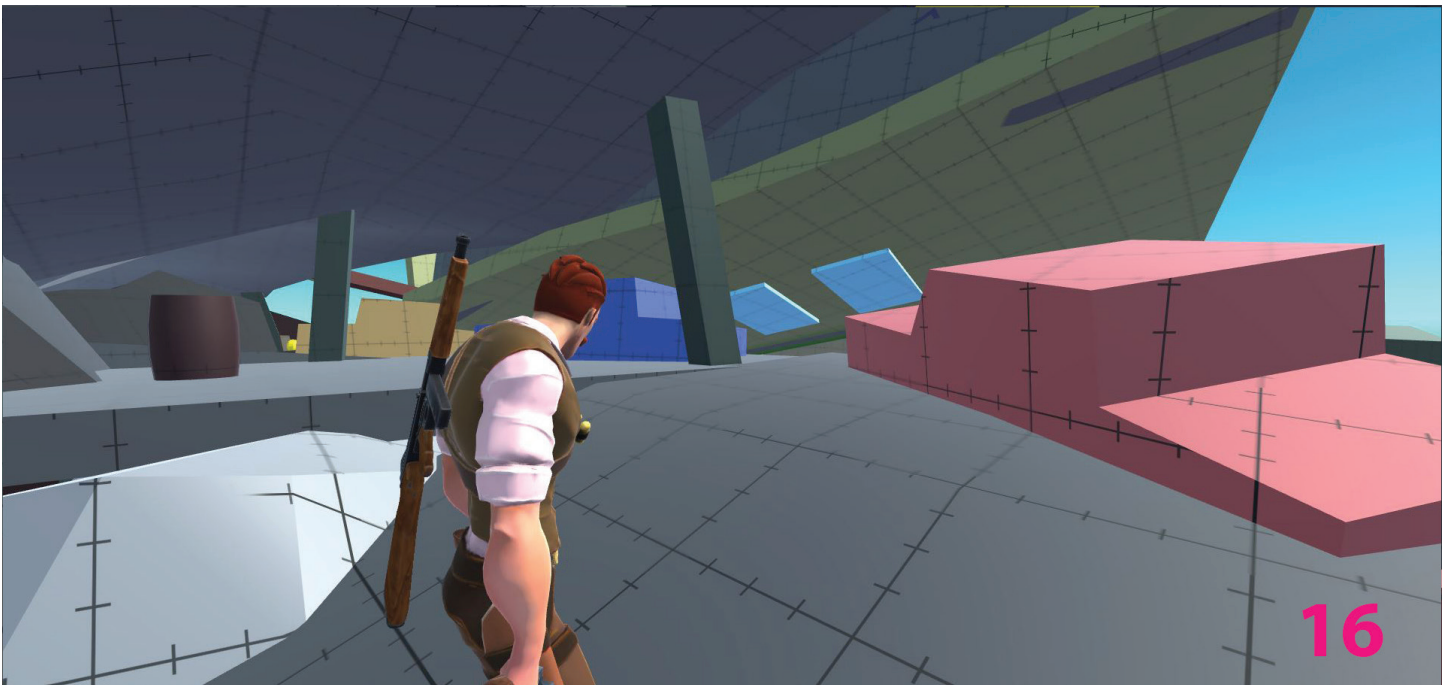
14. When the Player turns around to exit the room, the Player sees a way up via the ramp, however it is currently too high and out of Player's reach.

1st Beat - City Streets and Buildings

Traversal & Exploration



15. The Player moves the garbage cart out of the room it was initially found in, and uses it as an elevated platform to jump up to the ramp above.



16. On the above floor, the Player sees the collapsed building resting on the parking structure.

1st Beat - City Streets and Buildings

Traversal & Exploration



17. As the Player approaches the place where the collapsed building is adjoining the parking structure, an opening to the outside is seen ahead.



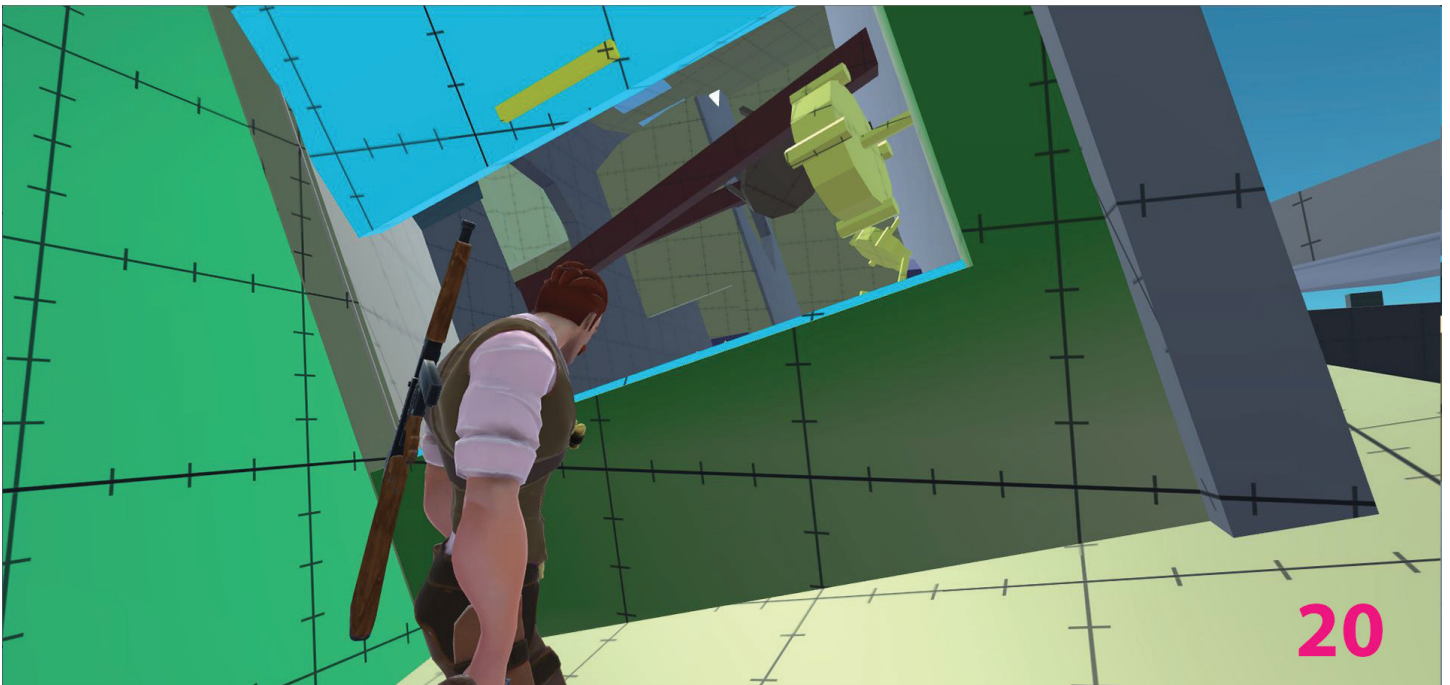
18. Standing in the opening, the Player looks down onto the street below where the Player was previously, and is reminded of the challenge in scaling over the huge sinkhole.

1st Beat - City Streets and Buildings

Traversal & Exploration



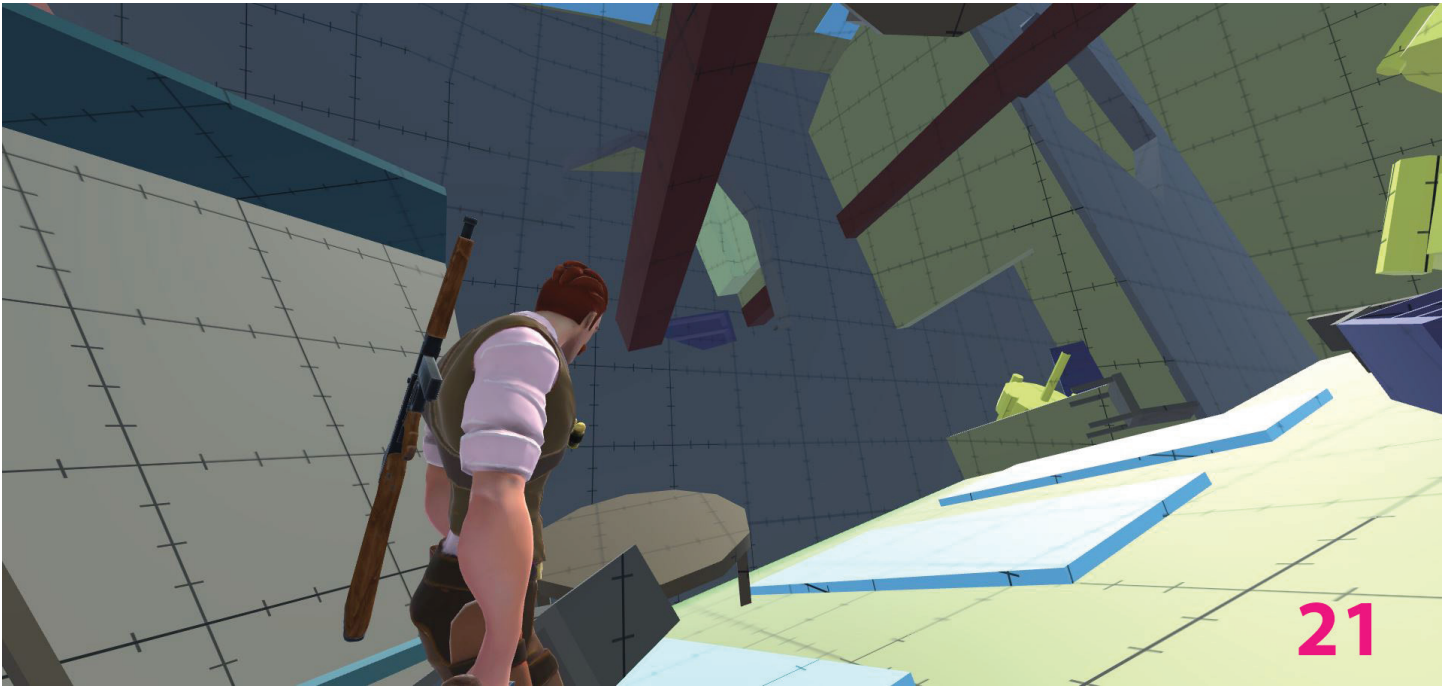
19. When the Player turns around to face the collapsed building, the Player sees a set of glass doors that are currently closed.



20. The Player approaches the doors and interacts with the lower door to force it to open, and climbs through the opening into the building.

1st Beat - City Streets and Buildings

Traversal & Exploration



21. The Player enters into what appears to have once been a rooftop cafe. The Player makes way around the broken windows on the floor, and approaches an opening in the wall ahead.



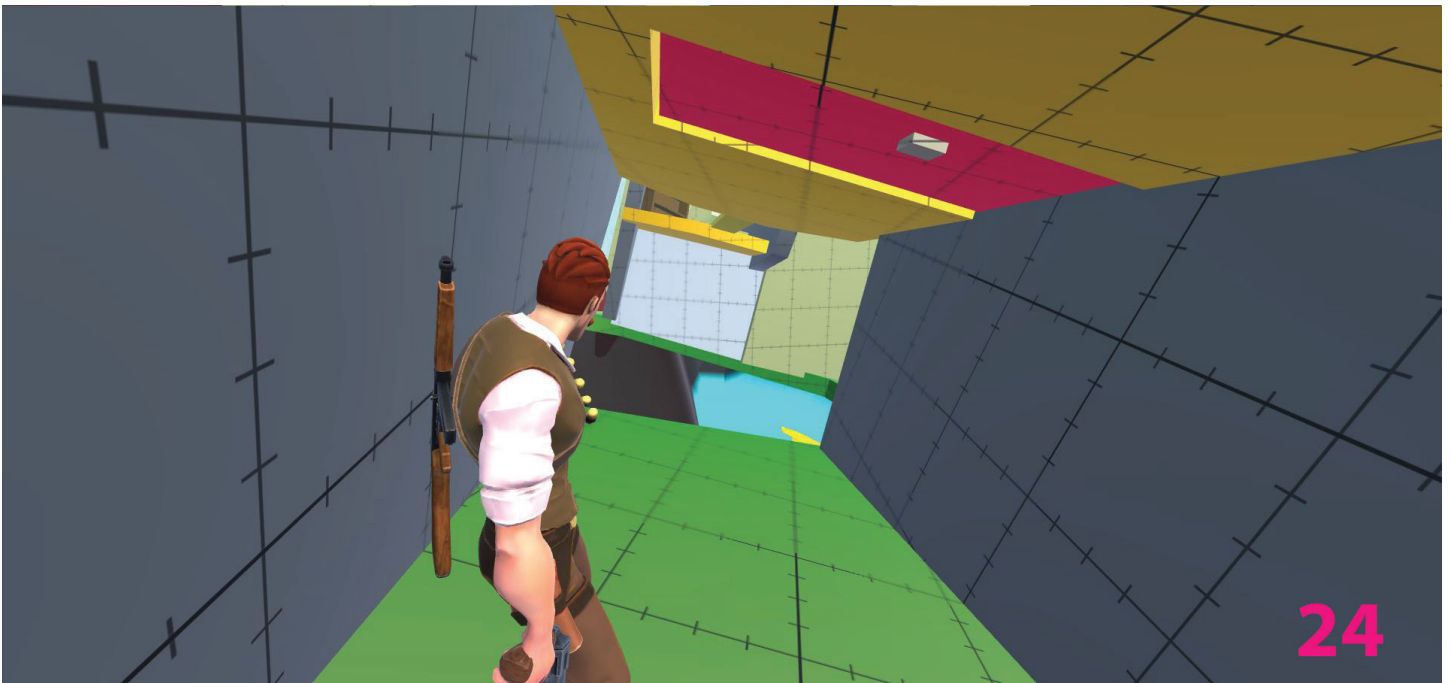
22. The Player discovers that the opening is too high up for the Player's jump height, and boosts Ellie up, who then pushes down a bookshelf for the Player to use as a height boost.

1st Beat - City Streets and Buildings

Traversal & Exploration



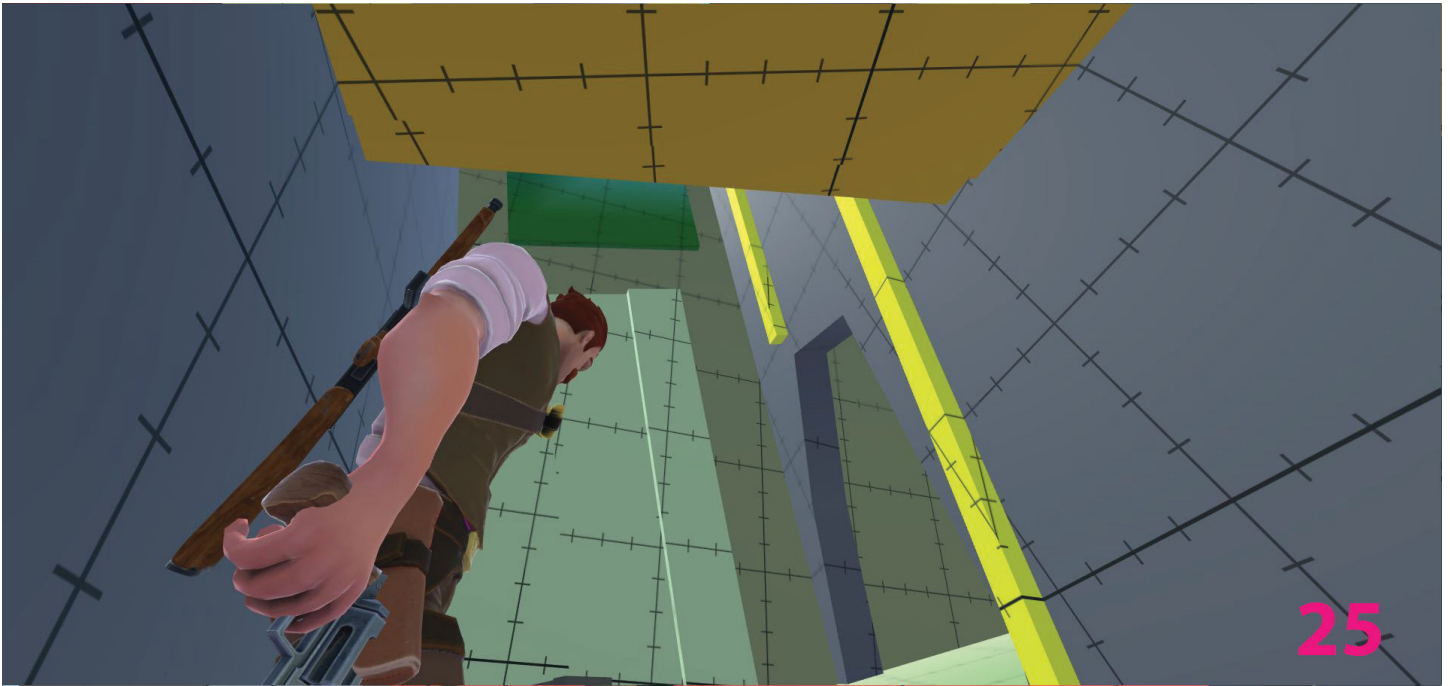
23. The Player sees a giant hole in the building facade, revealing the sinkhole underneath, and a potential path via a wooden plank bridging over the gap, but from an adjacent room.



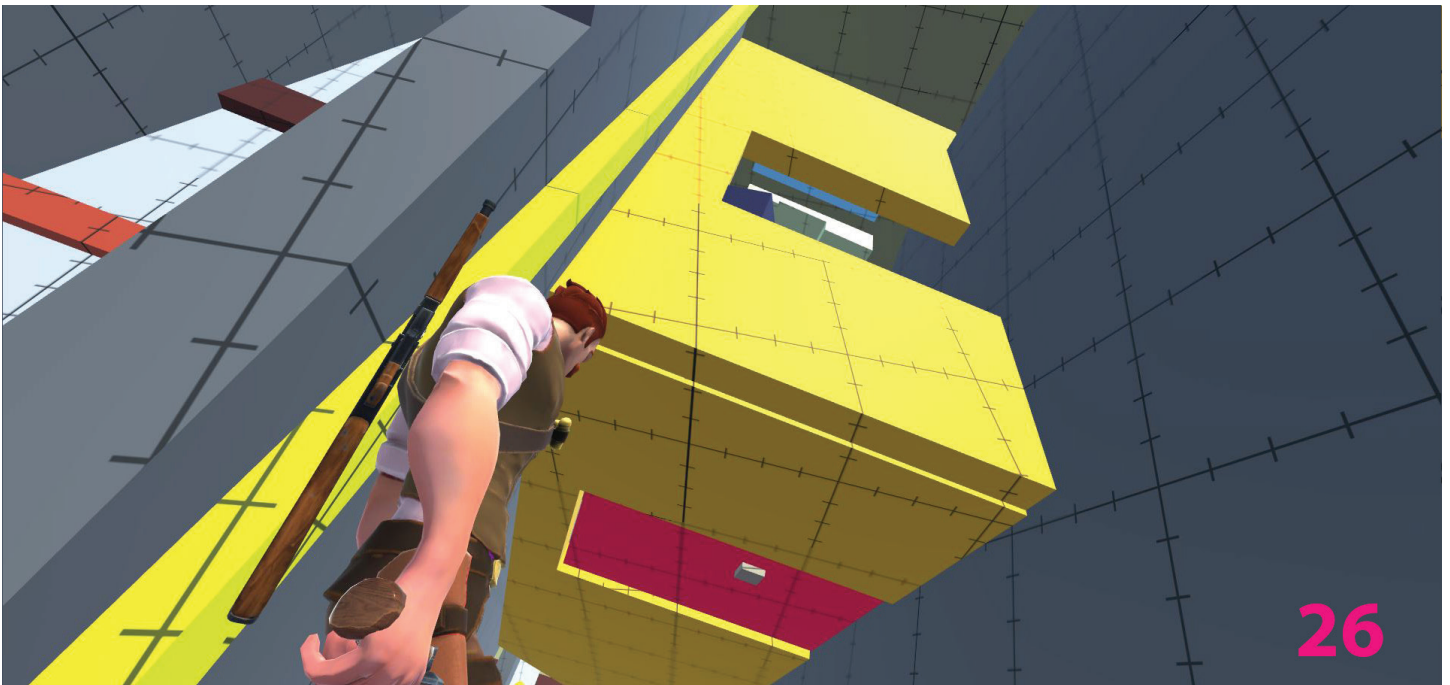
24. The Player drops down into the adjacent corridor space, however discovers that the wooden plank can be accessed from inside the residential unit above. The Player interacts with the red door, however it is locked from the inside. (Puzzle Introduced)

1st Beat - City Streets and Buildings

Traversal & Exploration



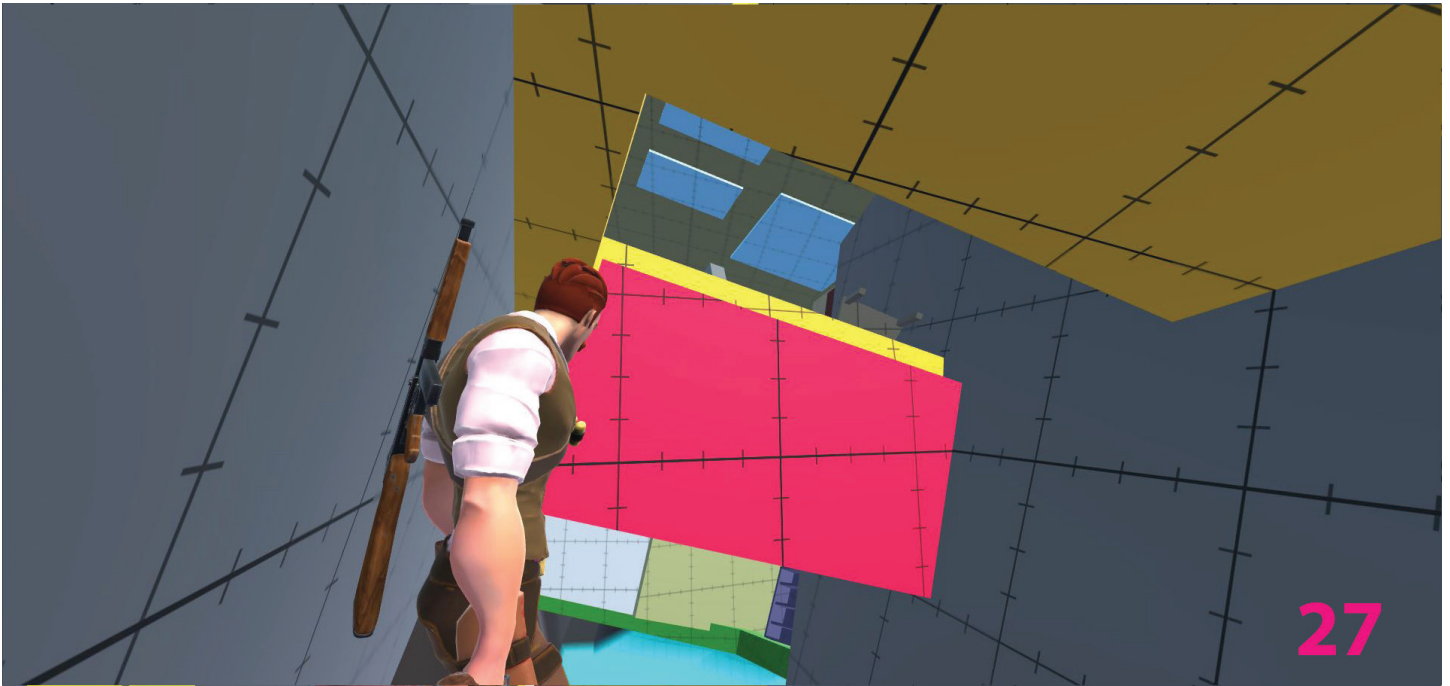
25. To find a solution to the locked door, the Player turns around and finds vertical elements drawing attention vertically upwards. This is complemented by a brightly-lit window above.



26. The Player discovers a door opening up above that leads into the residential unit, however currently out of the Player's jump height. Here, the Player boosts Ellie up into the opening.

1st Beat - City Streets and Buildings

Traversal & Exploration



27. Ellie unlocks the red door from the inside, swinging it open. The Player uses the grips on the door to climb up into the unit above.



28. The Player carefully walks across the wooden plank, to reach the platform on the other side. (Puzzle Solved)

1st Beat - City Streets and Buildings

Traversal & Exploration



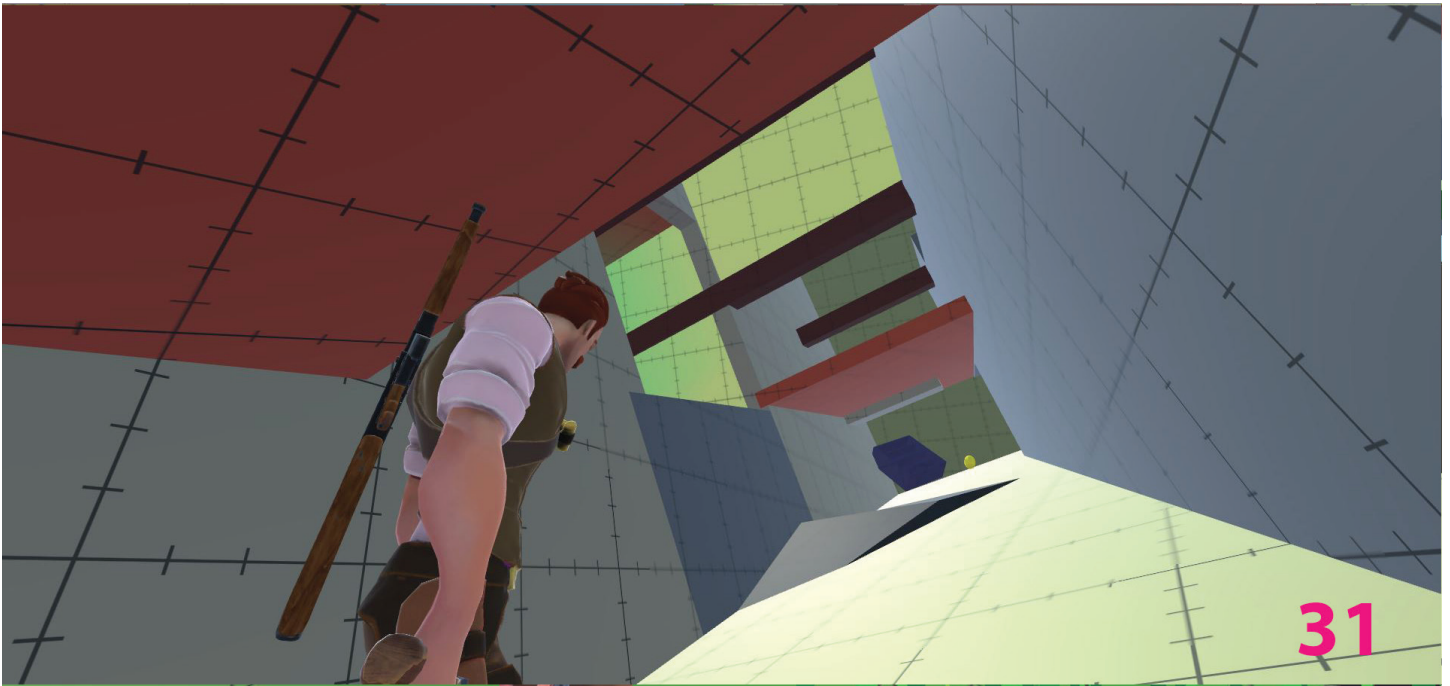
29. The Player drops down into a double-height living room, and discovers the path forward through the same opening through which the Player entered the room.



30. The Player comes across another opening in the building facade, framing the waterfall. Here, the Player has to carefully walk along the ledge to avoid the sure fall of death.

1st Beat - City Streets and Buildings

Traversal & Exploration



31. The Player enters an another corridor space, and sees a flood of light spilling out from an opening up above, indicating the way out. Here, the Player is also attracted by objects down at the end of the corridor.



32. At the end of the corridor, the Player enters an another apartment. Here, the Player has to avoid the cracked windows on the ground to reach and gather the resources (Optional Path).

1st Beat - City Streets and Buildings

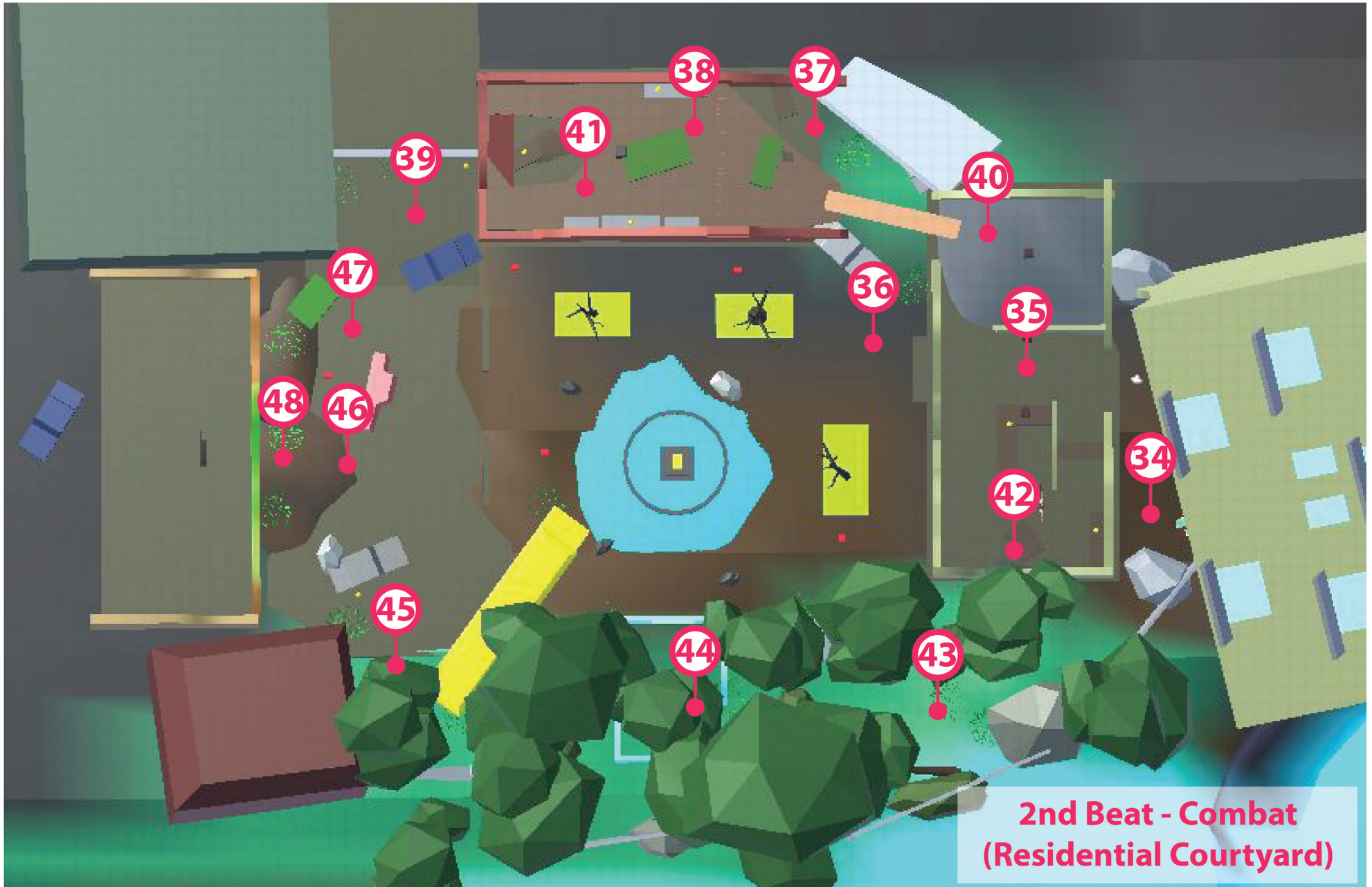
Traversal & Exploration



33. The Player returns to the exit and jumps onto the opening. At the end of the hallway, the Bank building can be seen above the treelines (End of 1st Beat).

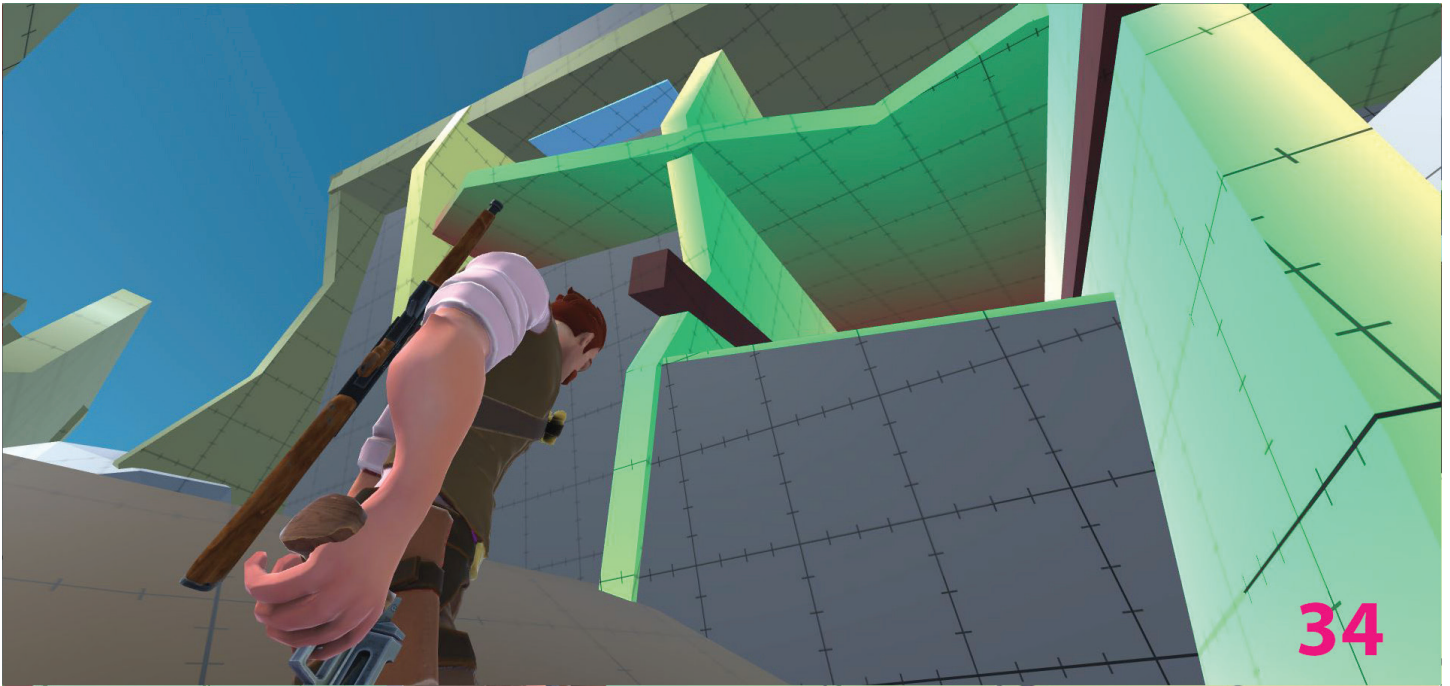
2nd Beat - Residential Courtyard

Overview Map



2nd Beat - Residential Courtyard

Combat



34. The Player drops down from the hallway onto the ground outside. When the Player turns around, it is obvious that the drop is a one-way path, meaning this is a point of no return (Start of 2nd Beat).



35. The Player enters into what was previously the groundfloor lobby of the collapsed building looking out into the residential courtyard. Here, the Player sees several Marauders drop down from the opening, and start patrolling the area.

2nd Beat - Residential Courtyard

Combat



36. In this instance, the Player chooses to directly bolt out into the courtyard for a short / long range combat. The Player chooses to flank around the No Man's Land in the center.



37. The Player walks over to the brick building on the right side of the courtyard. Here, the Player gathers additional resources before engaging the first set of enemies.

2nd Beat - Residential Courtyard

Combat



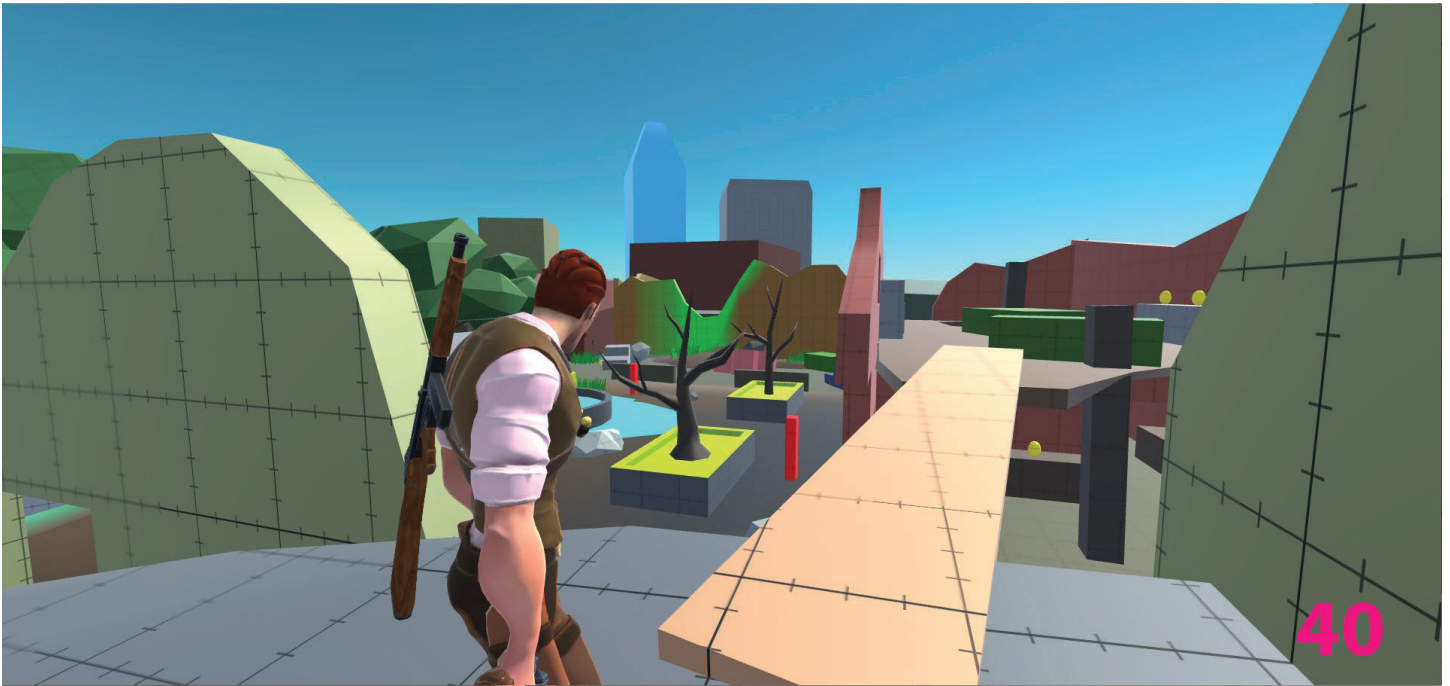
38. The Player enters the adjacent room and confronts an enemy. Here, the Player may execute different actions based on preferred play style (Stealth looping around covers, etc).



39. The Player exits out of the brick building into a corner alcove. The Player is now closer to the opening in the building facade, which is the exit out of this combat encounter area.

2nd Beat - Residential Courtyard

Combat



40. In a different scenario, the Player walks up to the second floor of the lobby building, and walks across a narrow plank to reach the second floor of the brick building.



41. The Player uses building facades as cover to stealthily sneak past the patrols without being noticed. The Player looks down onto the courtyard and sees the exit ahead.

2nd Beat - Residential Courtyard

Combat



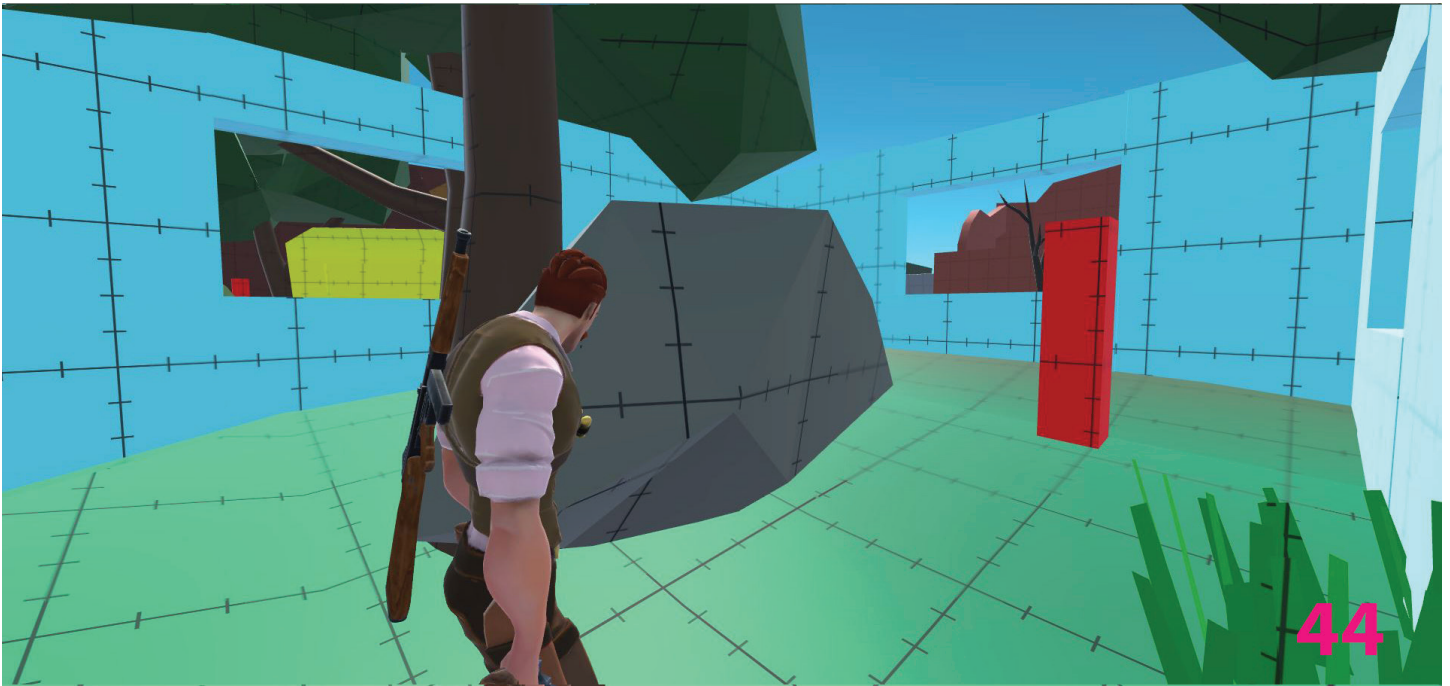
42. In yet another scenario, the Player chooses the forested path to traverse through the combat zone. Upon walking out of the building, the Player sees the irregular terrain ahead.



43. As the Player walks through the area, it can be seen that the Player's lines of sight are very limited by the close proximity of environment objects. The Player sees a blue shack up ahead.

2nd Beat - Residential Courtyard

Combat



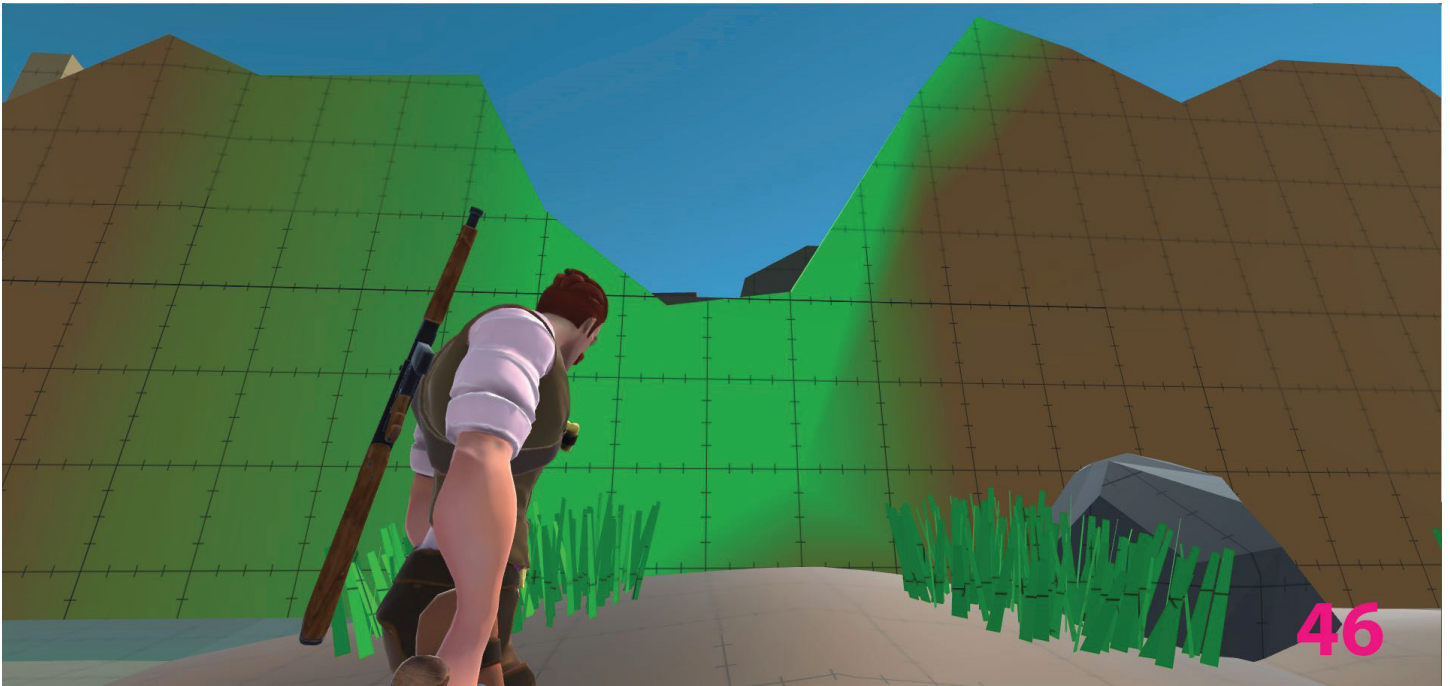
44. The Player enters the blue shack, and encounters a stationed marauder. Out through the window openings, more enemies can be seen in the distance.



45. After confronting / bypassing the marauders along the path, the enemies now have their backs against the Player. Here, the Player sees the exit opening to the left.

2nd Beat - Residential Courtyard

Combat



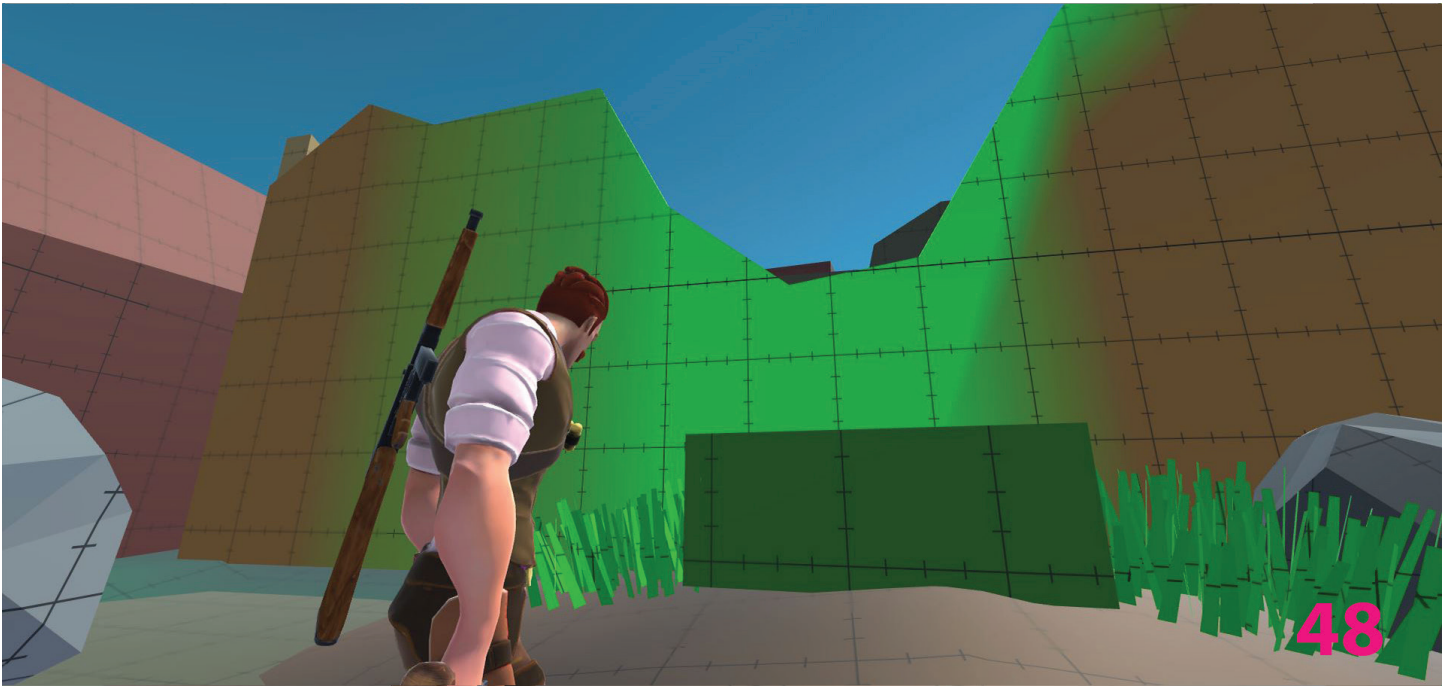
46. The Player approaches the exit opening, however discovers that it is too high of a jump, and henceforth a need for an elevated platform.



47. After searching around the area, the Player finds a garbage cart nearby, and pushes it towards the exit. Note that if some of the enemies are nearby, the Player will be shot down.

2nd Beat - Residential Courtyard

Combat



48. The Player jumps onto the garbage cart and exits the courtyard combat zone through the opening in the building facade (End of 2nd Beat).