INTRODUCTION:

In this level design document, I will be completing the set task, which is to create a level by showcasing my level design knowledge. In the document we will be going over the concept of the level, and what will be included or changed in the final version. The level will be broken down in the following manner. Information such as game mechanics, story, setting and challenges will be covered. Visual representation & Graphic sketches will be included, that way visualisation will be easier to understand.

Table of Contents

1. Initial Concept*:*

From the information that was gathered through the brief, the first thing in mind was to gather creative inspiration from a game such as Temple Run. Temple Run is an endless 3D runner game, where the player is being constantly chased by demonic monkeys. This was a great concept at the time, so re-creating something similar was planned for the final scene. Although, for the beginning scene of the game, games such as

Will Rock are more fitting. Will Rock is a first-person shooter that was released in 2003. The gameplay is similar to Serious-Sam, but the game managed to create an amazing atmosphere utilising the environment to its advantage. The game made it very clear which direction the player must take. Inspired by these titles, I am hoping to achieve something similar.

1.1   Setting:

Due to the level being dull & dump, the graphical theme for the level will create an atmosphere of horror. The level will contain assets such as rain, fog and night-time.

The level starts off with the main character being sent on a mission by the authorities due to a series of local disappearances.

On arrival at an isolated Scottish island the player is greeted with heavy rain, fog and a cold atmosphere. The player sets off to adventure around the island to find a village. Once the player has arrived at the village, there will be a villager greeting them, and explaining that there is a monster that was last seen walking into a building not too far from the village.

Once the information has been received the player is able to explore around the village or head towards the building. Approaching the building the ground rises from the ground and splits and creates what seems to be like a jump puzzle. The player must jump from platform to platform to reach the building, once at the top the door will already be open. After entering the building, there will be a minimal amount of light. The player will head forward and find a new jump puzzle with moving platforms while moving through the puzzle the player will have to take a different direction to obtain a superpower, which will be double jump. After the power has been gathered the player will now be able to double jump, which will make challenges easier to complete; after returning to the original track of the puzzle, upon reaching the end there will be a hole the player will jump through.

At landing the player will realise that they have landed in a cave. Inside the cave, there will be writing on the walls of the player explaining what that the objective to complete a sacrifice is to collect the floating coins. Once the player has collected 4/4 coins from different rooms, there will be another jumping puzzle to reach the portal. Travelling through the portal will alter the players stats such as movement speed and jump height. Once the portal has been passed through the Sleeper will be awoken. After the awakening, the player will have 2 minutes to escape the environment. Once the player has reached the ending, a cinematic will play of them going away on a boat.

1.2 Goal:

The level begins once the player has arrived at the isolated island. From there onwards, the direction which the player should take will be clear and easy to understand. The main goal for the player is to adventure and escape around a time limit but they will have to follow a set route, to be able to trigger the win condition that has been set. The player can lose the level by running out of time, or simply jumping off platforms / failing puzzles.

Due to the path being linear, the player will be able to follow easily with little guidance. Conditions that will affect gameplay will only start appearing once the player has gone through the portal.

1.3 Inspirational Imagery:

In this section, I will be going over the images that inspired me for the theme that I'm going for in the actual prototype. With figure 2 in place, it will make implementation of buildings a lot easier, the image helps structure the building and allows for creative freedom.
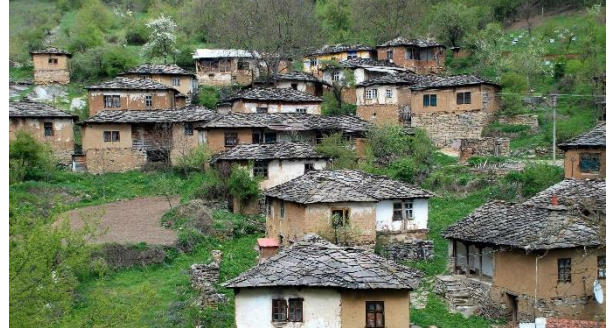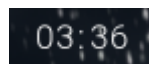

Figure 1. Shows cave tunnel   Figure 2. Abandoned village.

2.Technical Implementations

In this section subjects such as the interface, the view mode and gameplay conditions will be discussed.

2.1 Timer

The timer will be a technical feature that will be implemented at the final scene of the game where the player is prompted to escape. Once the player has stepped through the portal, the timer will begin with the camera shaking to alert the player that they have to hurry before the Sleeper catches up. If the player fails to complete the last puzzles, once the timer is finished the loss condition will trigger. If the player achieves victory before the timer ends, then they will receive the winning cutscene.

2.1 Artefacts

Once the player arrives at the building level, they will have to collect all the artefacts so they can proceed further. Once all the artefacts are collected the level will then trigger the portal to open, which will allow the player to run through. Without the artefacts collected the player is unable to proceed further.

2.2 Double-Jumping

Double jumping is a mechanic that will be acquired by the player once they have explored the building. Double-jumping will allow the player to complete puzzles faster and reach different locations quicker. Although if misused it can lead into level failure, or the player dying.

2.3 Solving Puzzles

The puzzles the player will be facing will be complex due to the platforms moving, if the player misses the moving platform, due to double-jumping or miss positioning. The puzzles must be resolved so the player is able to earn their new abilities / progress in the game.

3. Diagrams

In this section, diagrams will be used to showcase how the game system will work, also going to showcase the level design and the game map.

3.1 Onion Diagram

With this diagram we can see all the tasks the player has to complete in order to defeat the game. This diagram showcases all the essential points that build up the player experience throughout the level. Progressing through the diagram allows the player to unlock new features that are part of the game. When creating the game, this diagram will be followed, the beginning of the diagram will be the most important including the outer layer. These two are the main mechanics the game will be focusing around. Anything in the middle layer, is easily implementable. Achieving a great level with good movement is much needed.
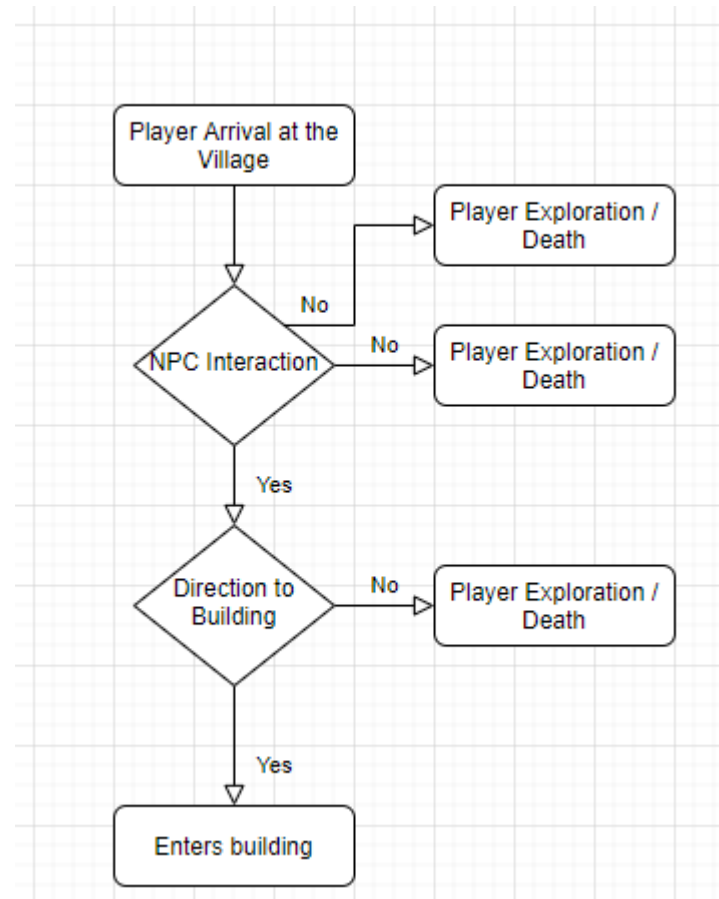

3.2 Level Diagrams

Level Design Document

This section will showcase the scenarios that we wish to achieve for each level.
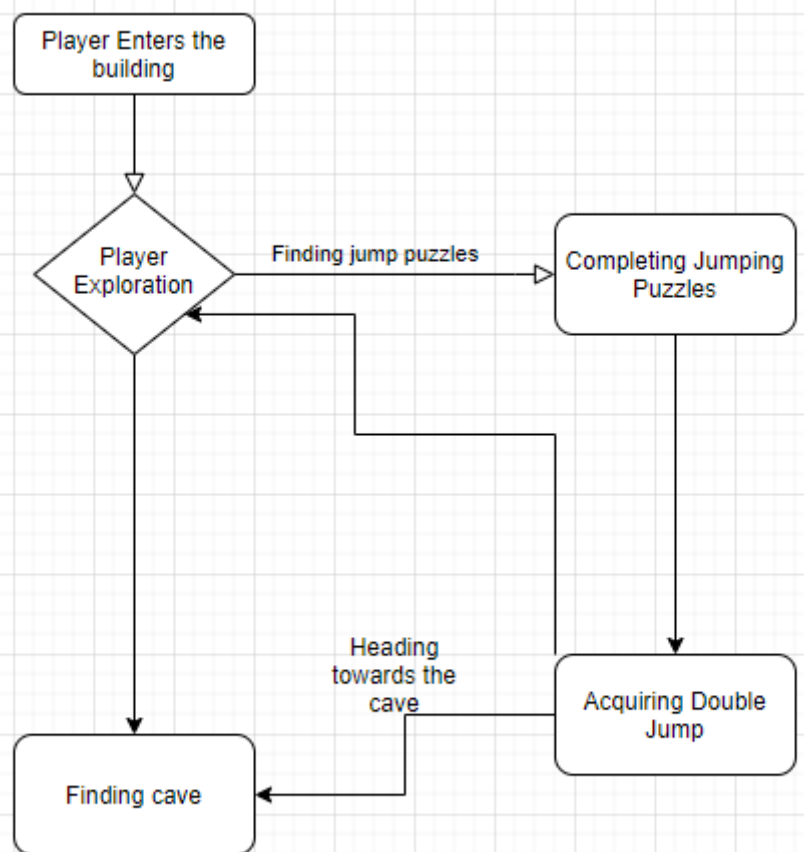
Village Diagram:

With this diagram we can see the possible scenarios once the player has arrived at the village. If the player interacts with the villager, they can proceed with the story line further if not they are free to explore around the level, while being encountered by the environment events. E.g. rain, fog and darkness.

Player Arrival at the Village

Player Exploration / Death

No

NPC Interaction — No → Player Exploration / Death

Yes

Direction to Building — No → Player Exploration / Death

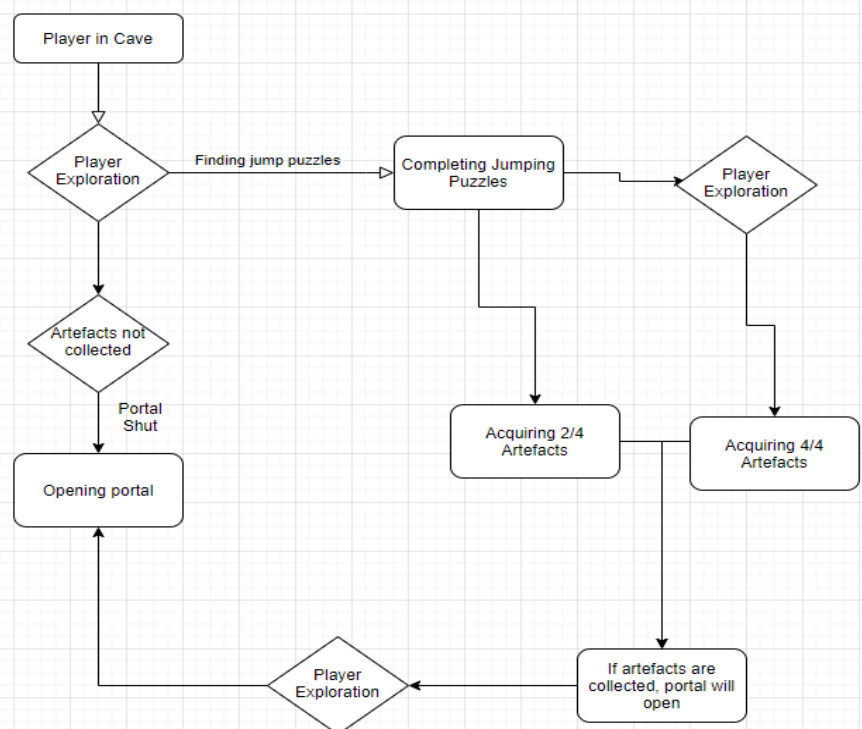Yes

Enters building

Level Design Document

Building Diagram:

In this diagram we can see the possible scenario inside the building. The player can adventure in the building discovering new surroundings, once the player is able to find the cave, they will require the double jump ability to proceed further. Without double-jumping the player will not be able to proceed further. Once the player has found the route to the jump puzzle and has completed them. They can then travel towards the cave directly after acquiring double jump or can walk back to the start.

```
Player Enters the
   building
        |
        v
   Player ------ Finding jump puzzles -----> Completing Jumping
 Exploration                                      Puzzles
        |                                            |
        |                                            v
        |           Heading                    Acquiring Double
        |          towards the                      Jump
        v            cave
   Finding cave  <-------------------------------
```

Cave Diagram:

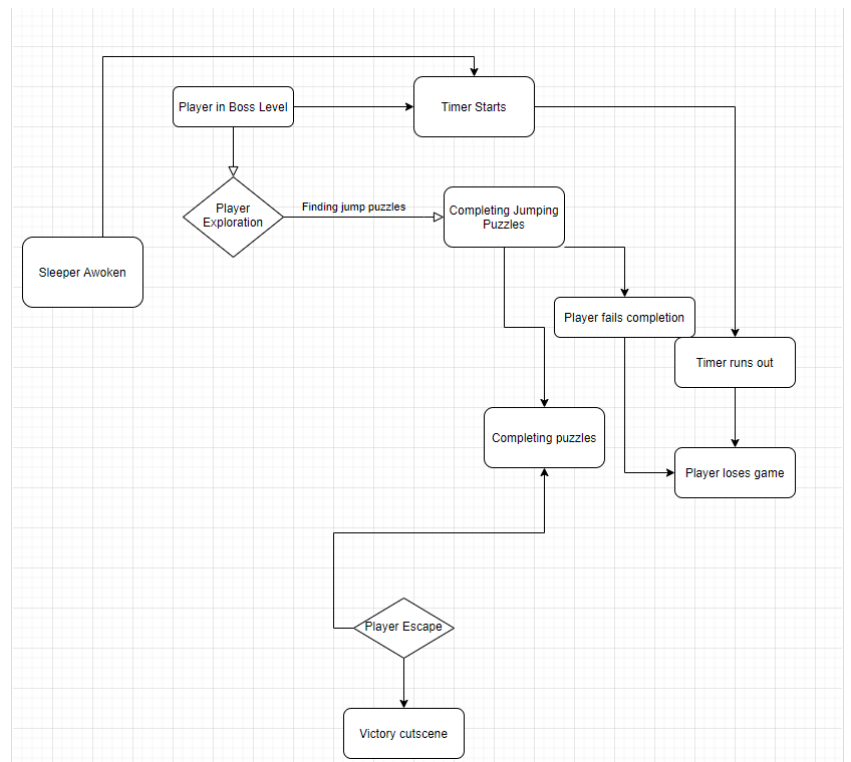Once inside the cave the player must discover the following puzzles to acquire the artefacts.

While exploring, the portal can be found but if all the artefacts haven't been collected the player can't pursue further, they must acquire all the artefacts. Once the first two artefacts have been collected the player is able to follow the path to acquire the last remaining artefacts. After collecting everything, the portal will open, and the player is able to travel through it.

```
Player in Cave
      |
      v
   Player ---- Finding jump puzzles ----> Completing Jumping ----> Player
 Exploration                                   Puzzles            Exploration
      |                                            |                   |
      v                                            v                   v
 Artefacts not                               Acquiring 2/4       Acquiring 4/4
  collected                                    Artefacts           Artefacts
      |                                                                |
  Portal                                                               v
   Shut                                                         If artefacts are
      v                                                        collected, portal will
 Opening portal <----------- Player Exploration <-----------          open
```
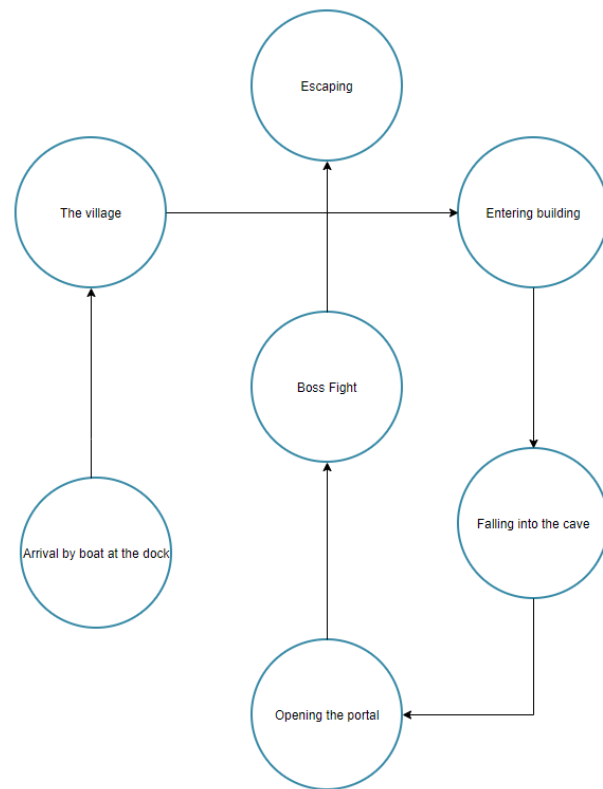
Madness Diagram:

Once the player passes through the portal, they will be greeted by a timer that will run out in two minutes. As soon as the player runs through the portal, the sleeper will be awoken. The player needs to find the puzzles, to be able to complete the level. If the player fails to complete the puzzles, the level will restart. If completed successfully the player will receive the victory cutscene.

Chain Diagram:

Level Diagram

Escaping

The village   Entering building

Boss Fight

Arrival by boat at the dock

Falling into the cave

Opening the portal

*4.*Narration / Storyline (Scenario):

Michael has been set off on a mission by the defence department. His mission was to get to an island in Scotland that has been known to be abandoned. Upon his arrival he is met with a disturbing amount of fog and heavy rain. The wind feels like ice. Adventuring through what seems like a village, he finds a lonely survivor. The survivor seems traumatised and scared and explains to Michael that there is a monster that went inside the tower. Michael then sets himself the mission to explore the building. Upon arrival at the building the ground start to levitate, frightened but still curious Michael adventures himself and jumps up on the platforms. Inside the building he finds more platforms and what seems to look like a coin. Michael grabs the coin and starts feeling a strong feeling of euphoria. To return on his adventure Michael had to take a big jump gap. With his new confidence he leaps and realises he can leap again. He then later finds a cave and jumps down. He seems to find some Egyptian looking artefacts and decides to collect them. He then gazes a portal, which seems to light up green. Jumping through the monster appears and the world is crumbling around him. He needs to escape!

5. Gameplay

In this section I will be going over the gameplay aspects.

Level Design Document

The gameplay is based around an average 3D Platformer, the player manoeuvres Michael around the map to complete set tasks. The player runs around collecting artefacts and unlocking the double-jump power up. Once all the artefacts have been collected the player has to defeat the boss by escaping on a boat at the end. The level is filled with platformer puzzles that must be completed.

5.1 Player Abilities

Movement (W,A,S,D):

Depending on the key pressed, the character will then follow that direction. Movement is also used to manoeuvre different abilities.
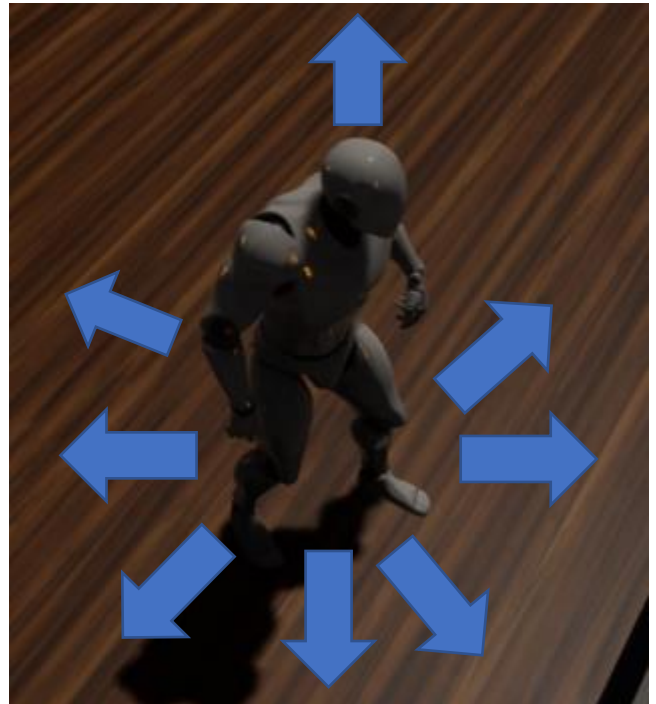
Jump (Spacebar):

The player can lift themselves from the ground by pressing spacebar. This helps the player to reposition on to a new terrain or reach a higher ground. Once double-jump has been unlocked the player is able to reach greater heights and travel around the map faster due to the momentum the jumping mechanic provides.
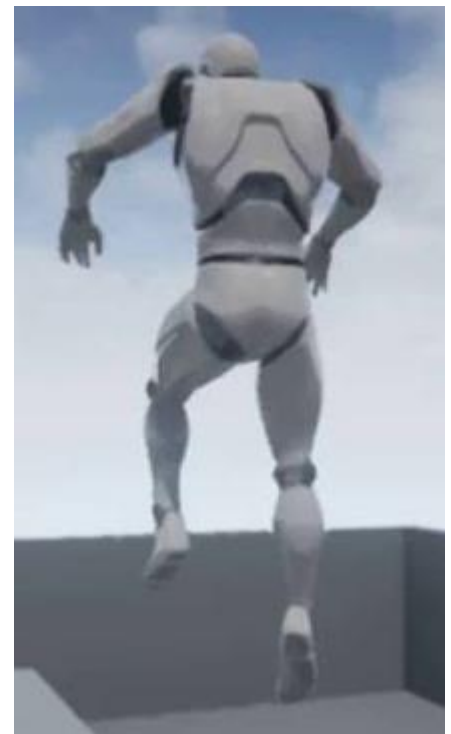
Torch (F):

The torch will be a necessity once the player heads inside the building, due to the light levels being low. The player is able to press F at any times to access the torch, the torch will allow the player to have an area of light around them.

Passing of the level:

The level should not take more than 4 minutes to complete. The gameplay will be simple and easy to follow making sure that all players are able to enjoy the virtual environment. Defeating the level should take around 1 minute and the increased difficulty shouldn't be too harsh.

6.Maps & Mechanic scenario Showcase

This is the level key map. Using the following symbols, I will be showcasing different scenarios in the level where the abilities can be used.
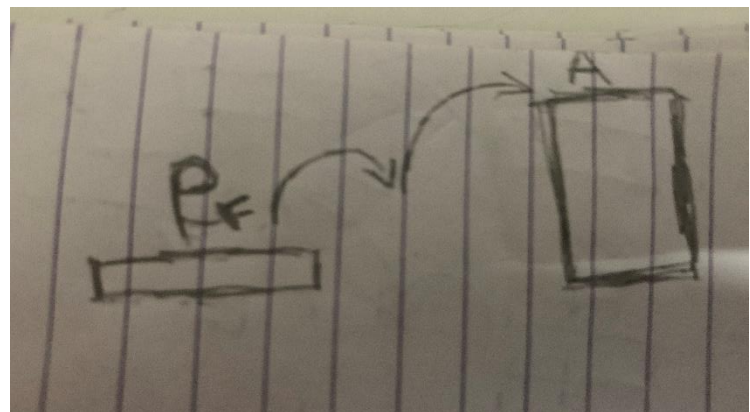
P = player.

Platform =

A = Artefact

F = Torch
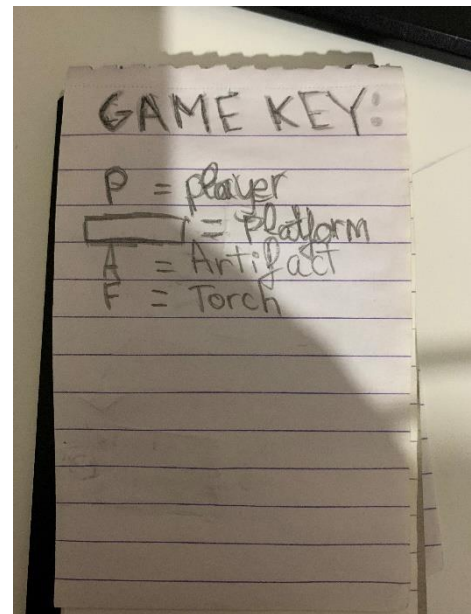
Single Jump:

In this picture you can see that the player is able to jump from platform to platform simply by pressing spacebar, once at the top they are able to reach the artefact.
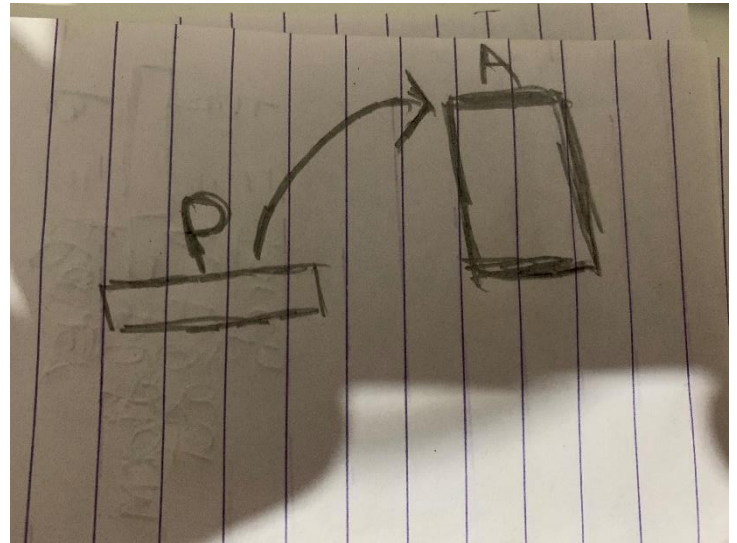
Double Jump:

In this picture we can see that the player can utilise the torch to see where the upcoming platform is. Once the direction has been found the player is able to jump over by double-tapping space.


Single & Double Jump Moving Platforms:

In the following image, the player can utilise one or the two mechanics. They can single jump when the platformer is near, or they can use momentum and reach the platform from further away by using double jump. This scenario is a bit more intense due to the movement of the platform; the player must make a strategical decision.
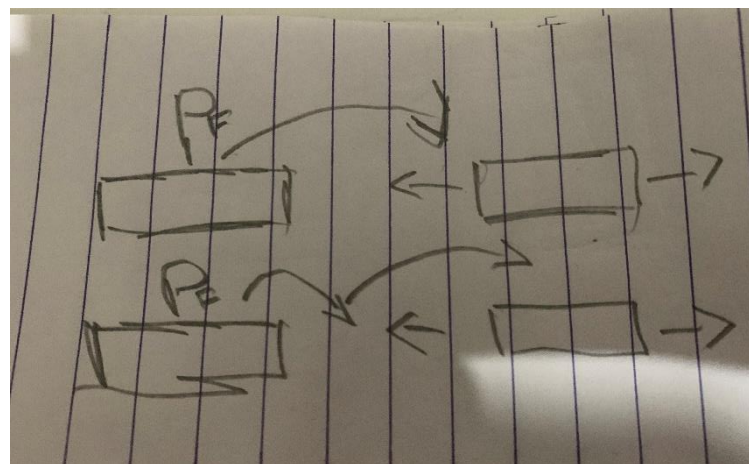
Single & Double Jump Up Down Platforms:

In this demonstration, we can see that the platforms are now moving up and down. Like previously showcased the player can plan on which ability they have to use, this is a difficult scenario so acting fast is a must need.
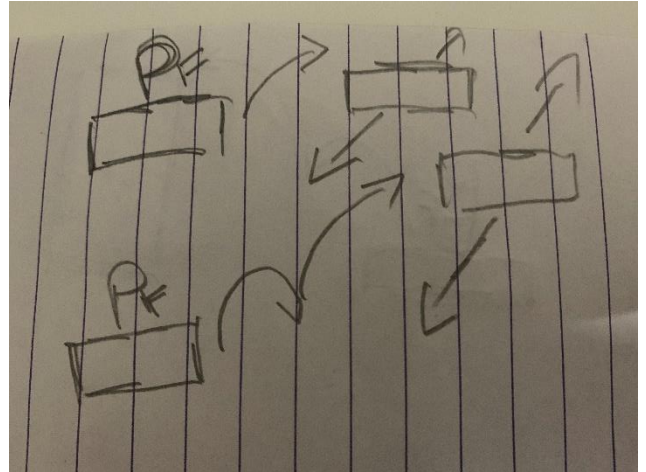
Level Maps:

The Village:

I've drawn a diagram out so I can showcase the path the player has to follow to be able to proceed to the levels. On arrival the player will be greeted with the village. Once arriving the player will have to cross a bridge to get into the village. The interactive villager will be located on the right side of the bridge, and the area will be surrounded with abandoned houses. Once the player gets the information from the villager, they can proceed further.
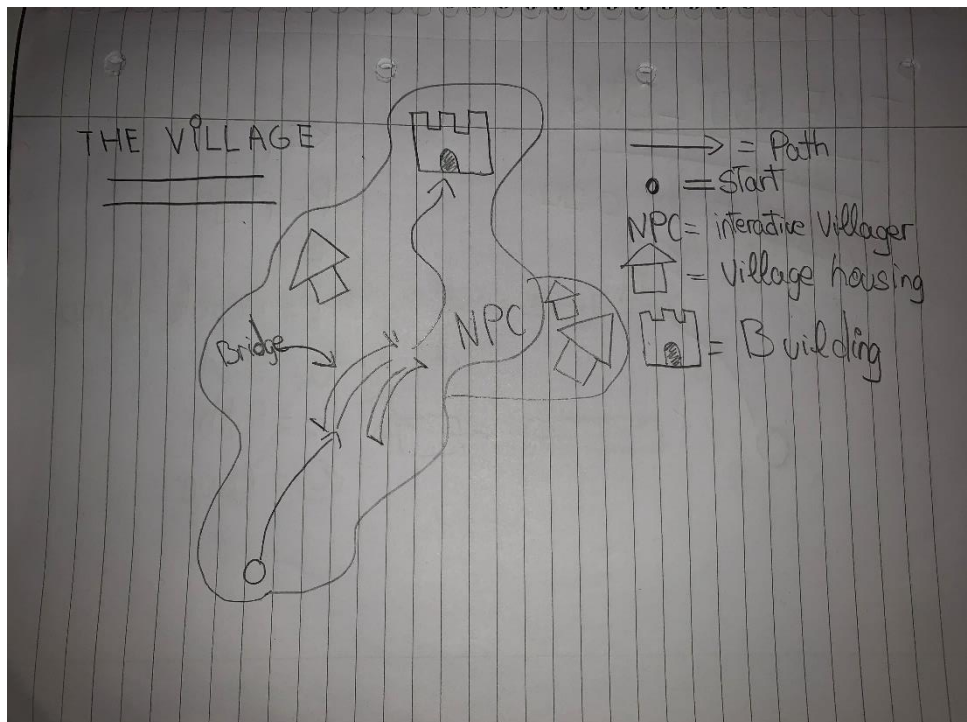
The Building:

Once inside the building the player will have to follow a set path otherwise, they will be sent into a blocked path which can result in wasted time or death if mispositioned. Once inside the building the player must complete a simple jumping puzzle which will reward them with the double jump ability. After the ability has been acquired there will be a big gap between the following platform, so the player is able to experiment with the new mechanic. Once the gap has been cleared. The player will then proceed to the cave level.
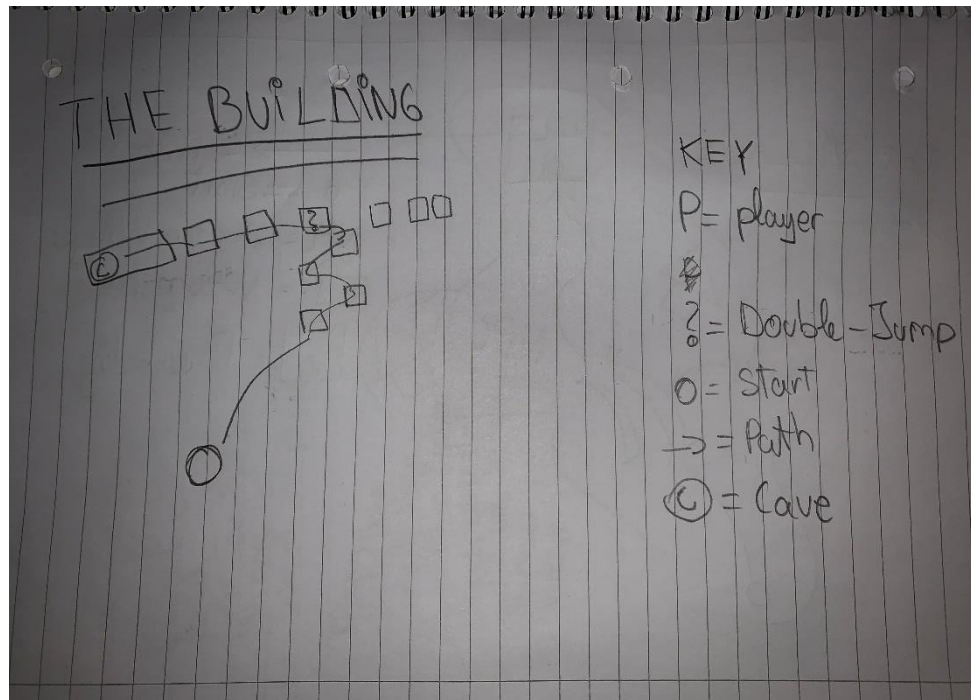
The Cave:

Once inside the cave the path will overlap due to the way it has been setup. Initially the player can take two routes which will both lead to the portal, but one way is faster by a few seconds. Collecting all the artefacts on the right first makes it easier and develops satisfaction for the player. While walking around there will be platform puzzles that the player must complete. Once all the artefacts have been collected the player can proceed to the following level.
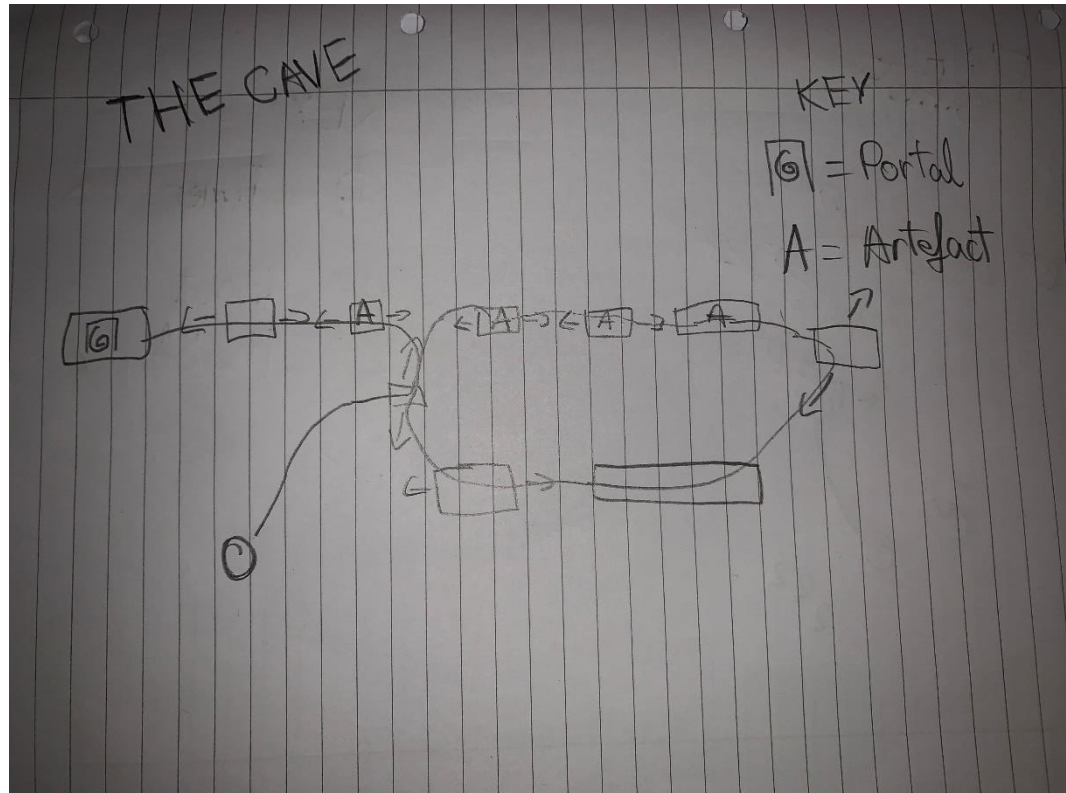
The Madness:

This level will be time based; the player must act fast to complete the platformer puzzles. The platforms will be patrolling at different speed rates to increase difficulty. The level will now also prompt camera shake to create an effect of a chase. Once the player has defeated the puzzle, they are able to depart with a boat.