

Upon further review, it was decided that further adjustments needed to be made. First thing to be added was the addition of surrounding buildings with some having fire on them to further drive the theme of the map, being a city under attack.

The next thing was the redesign of the final section, the arrow billboard was found to stick out too much and felt extremely out of place, instead a helipad was added with green lighting surrounding it to give the player a more natural idea of the direction they need to go. As well to make the player jump off the building transferring them to level 2, a cutscene was added involving explosions, and then a string of flames that get closer to the player along with a pain volume causing damage overtime to the player if they do not jump from the building.

As well the opening part of the level was adjusted to make a more natural difficulty curve, by having the start be much easier for the player, and as well a rest section was added at the end with the stair case, this way the player does not feel like they're constantly in danger and gives the player a small rest between sections.

As well a trigger box was created to transport the player to the next level using the blueprint system, this was placed on the building below so when the player jumps off the building it will transport the player to the next level.

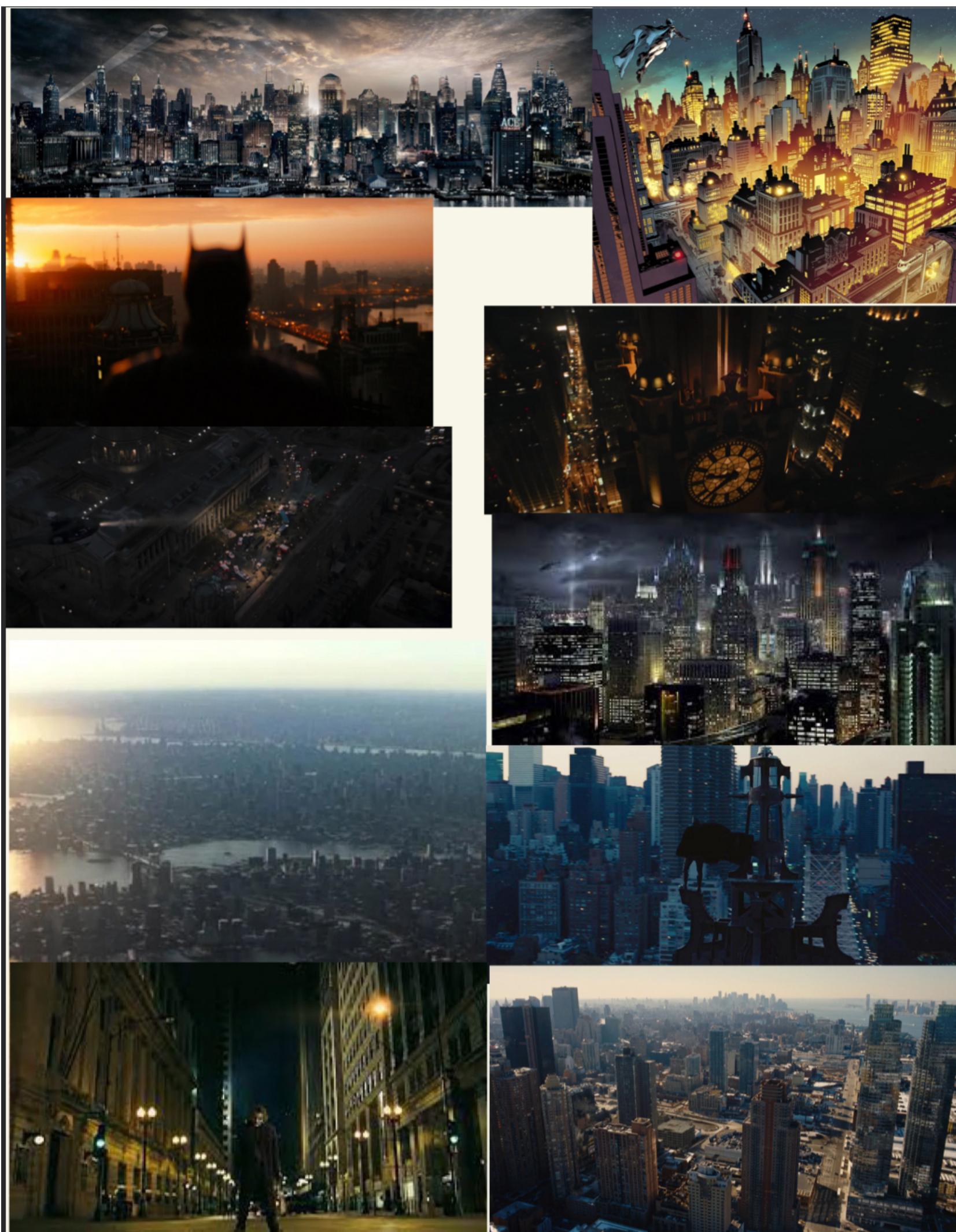
CITY RUN LEVEL - SKYLAR RICHES

PLANNING

INSPIRATION

The level being developed is being made for an action adventure game in the style of the Uncharted series that was developed by Naughty Dog games. The levels gameplay will involve a mix of stealth, platforming and high intensity action.

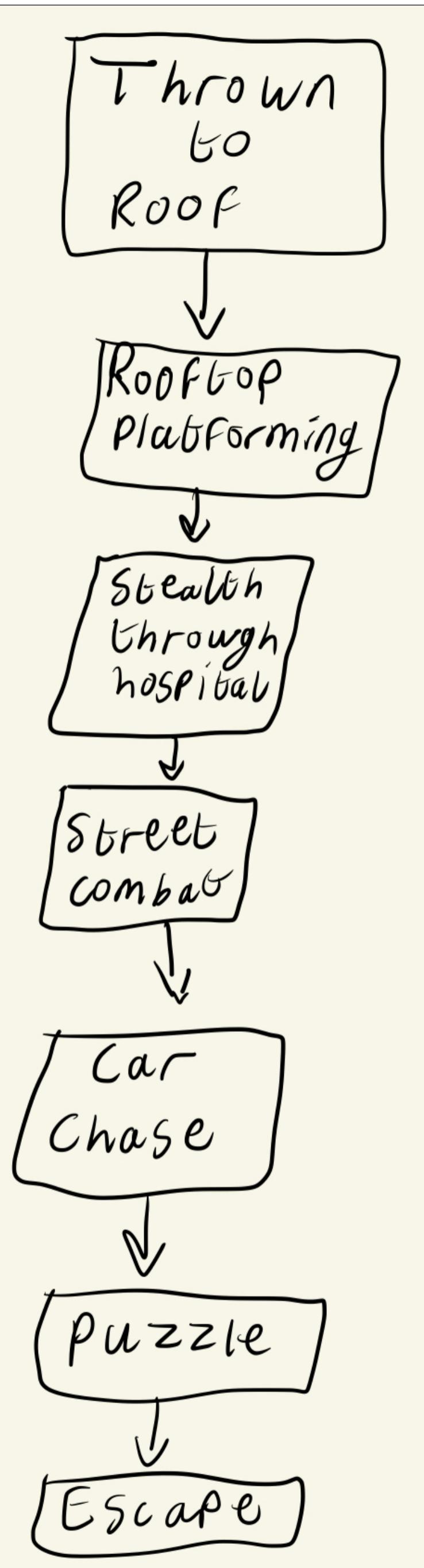
The setting of the level is going to be on the rooftops and streets of a modern city like Manhattan and the fictional city of Gotham City. Inspiration of the aesthetic of the level was gathered through finding images of modern cities and different interpretations of Gotham city as it was decided that focusing on the inspiration of Gotham city would be a good setting as it has the aesthetic of a modern city with the creative freedom for modifying the city layout to fit the gameplay of the level. It was also decided that it would be a good inspiration due to the popularity and success of the Batman Arkham game series developed by Rocksteady and Warner Bros Montreal. Images were gathered for both the skyline and street level of the city to make it easier to capture the style and aesthetic of the different areas of the level.



FLOW PLAN

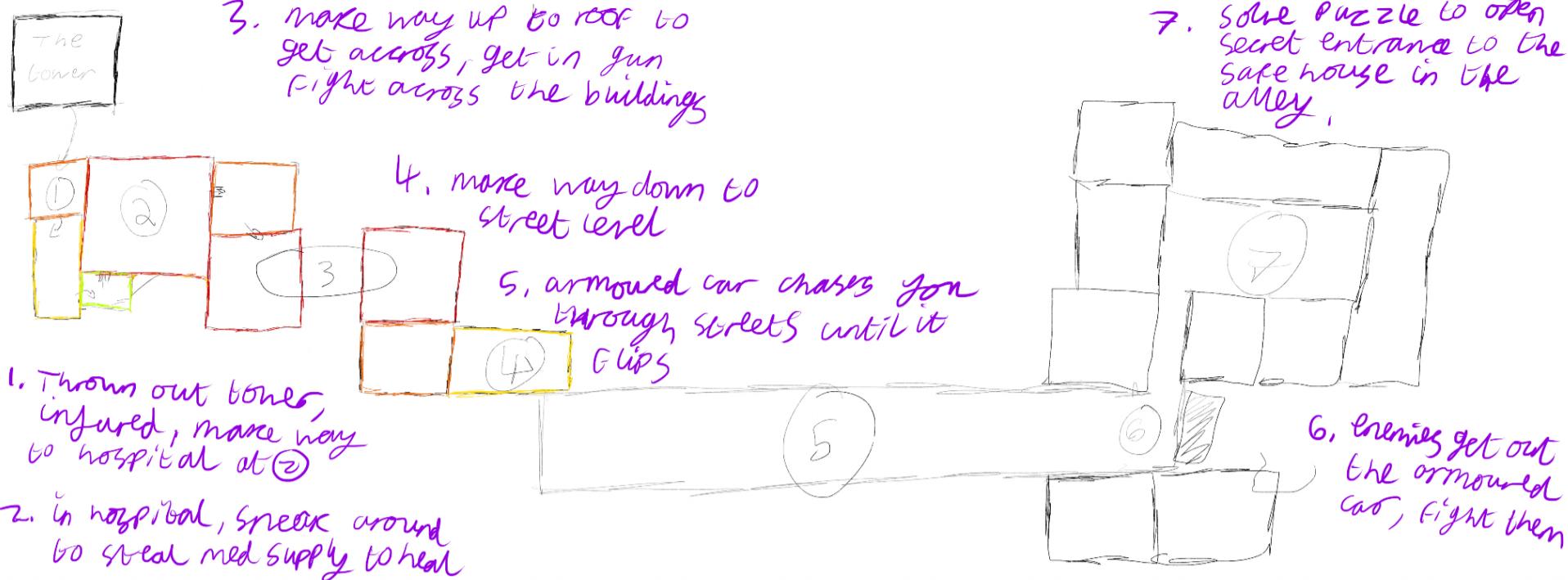
A narrative for the level was briefly planned; the player would have managed to escape the tower from level 1 and would land on the rooftop of a nearby building, they would then traverse the rooftops to the nearby hospital building where they could gather healing supplies and make their way down to the street level, where they would then be found by the enemy invasion force that is invading the city, the player would then be chased down by one of their armoured trucks until they eventually manage to escape.

Based on the narrative for the level, a basic node/flow chart was created to plan out how the level would be laid out from start to finish. This diagram would then be used to start drawing up the concept of the level and how it would play out.

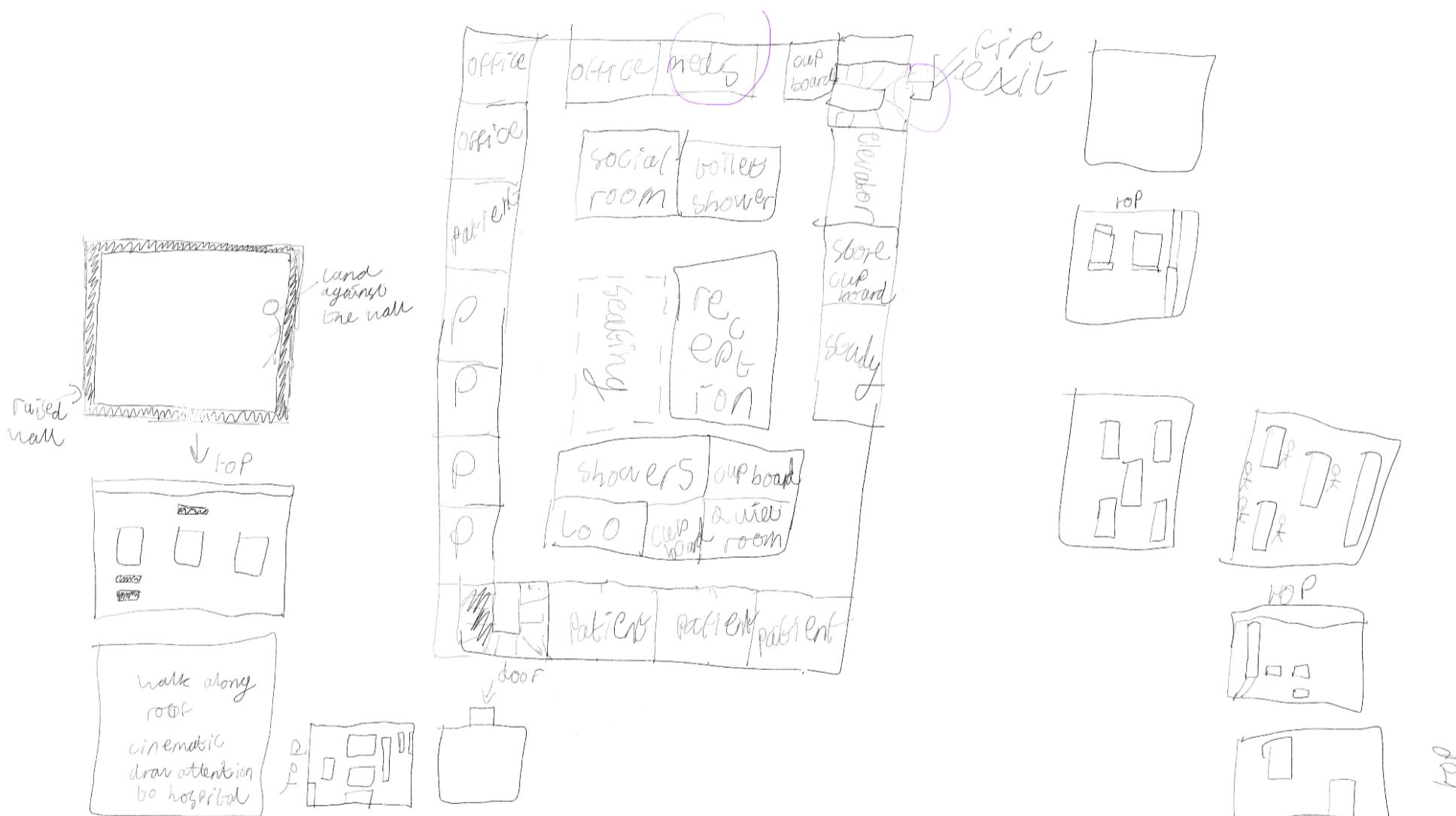


CONCEPT PLANS

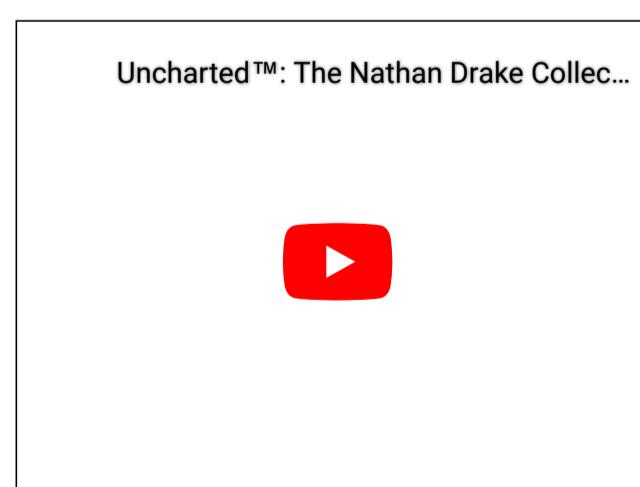
After the basic plan for the level was developed, a series of sketches were developed, showing the layout of the level.



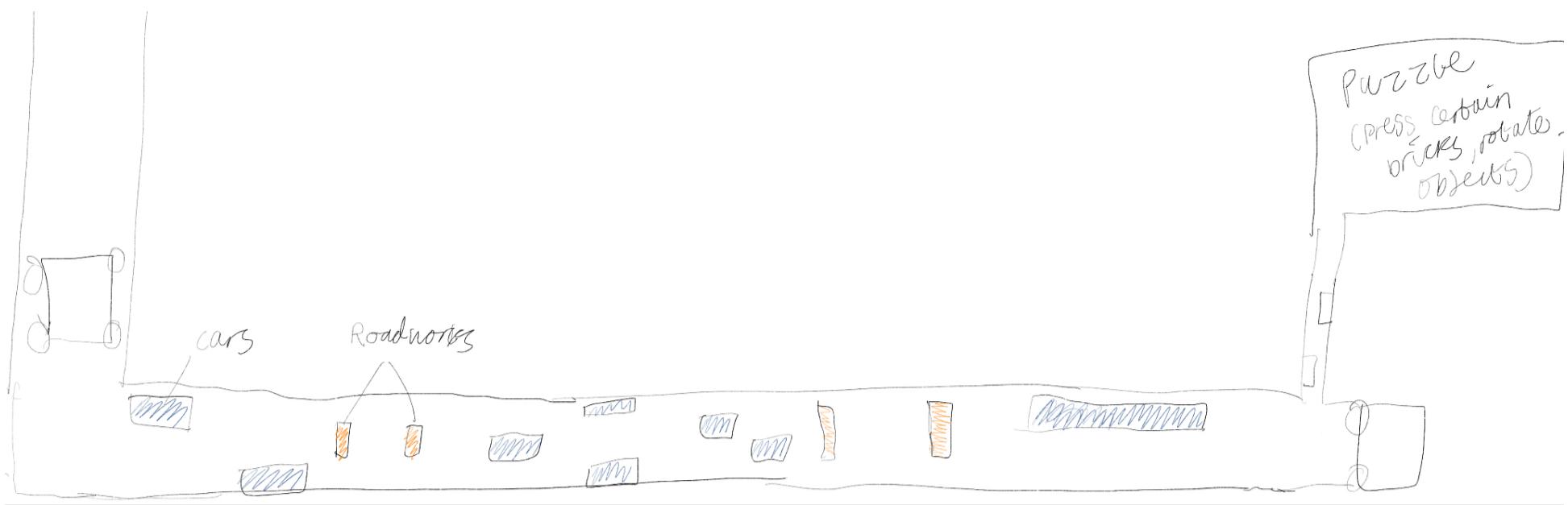
The level would start off on the rooftops, where the player is in an injured state, unable to sprint. They would be jumping across rooftops and climbing round the side of the buildings until they reached the hospital building. Inside the hospital they would be sneaking around to get medical supplies and then get out. They would have no weapons so if they are detected they would be killed with no chance of defending themselves, so the player would be forced to think carefully about how they approach that section of the level.



After making their way through the hospital the player would have made their way down to the street level where there would then be a chase sequence where the player is running away from an armoured truck. This section idea was inspired by a similar sequence in the Uncharted series.



After the player escapes the truck they would then go onto making their way into the safe house by solving a puzzle to open the secret entrance. This puzzle would require the player to match the code needed by rotating objects to be the right way around.

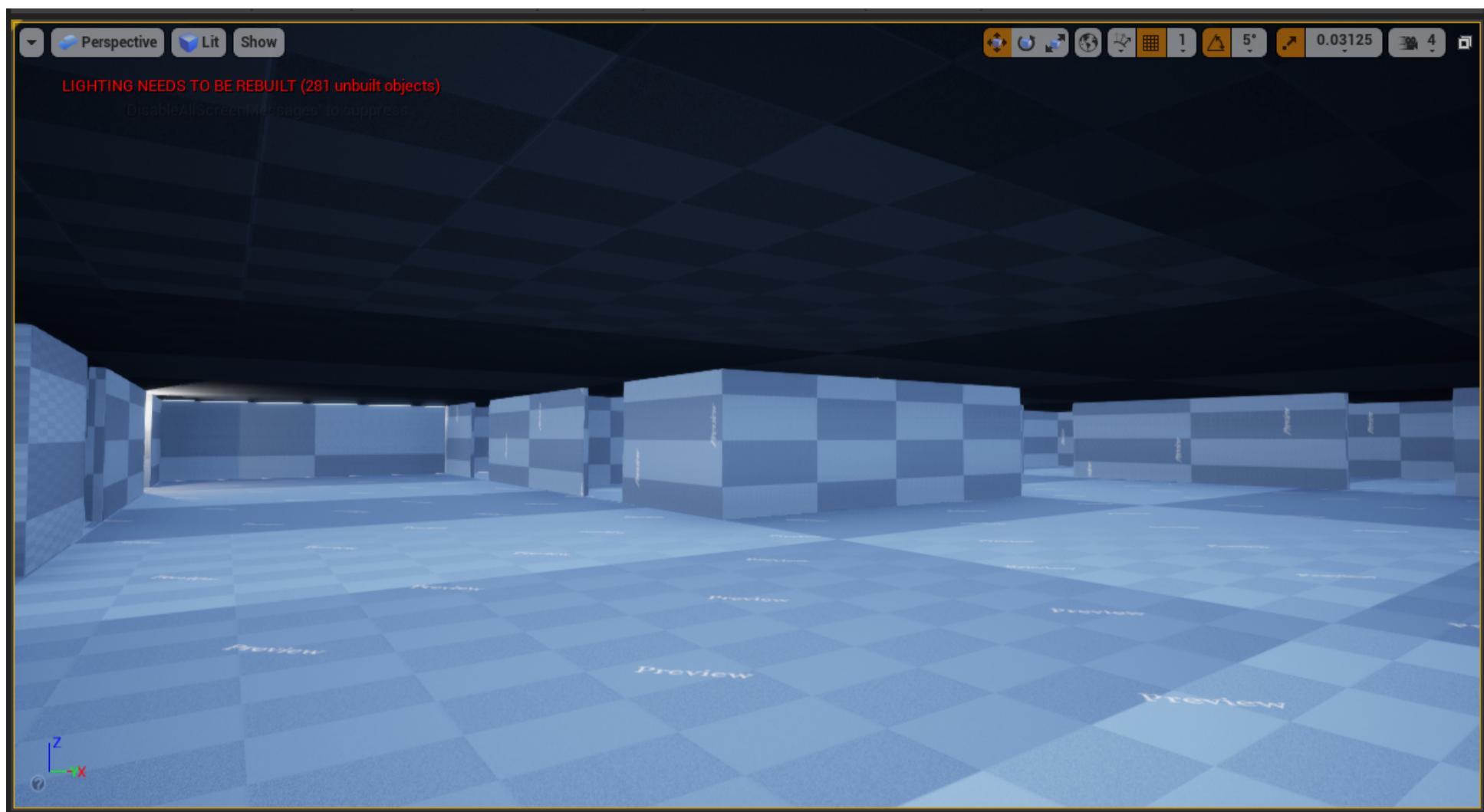


LEVEL ITERATION 1

After having planned out the level, development was started on creating the actual level. The level is split up into sections and each section was developed one by one. The first section of the level was the rooftop platforming section. In this section the player would drop down from the tower and make their way across several rooftops by jumping between roofs and platforms around the walls of the buildings.



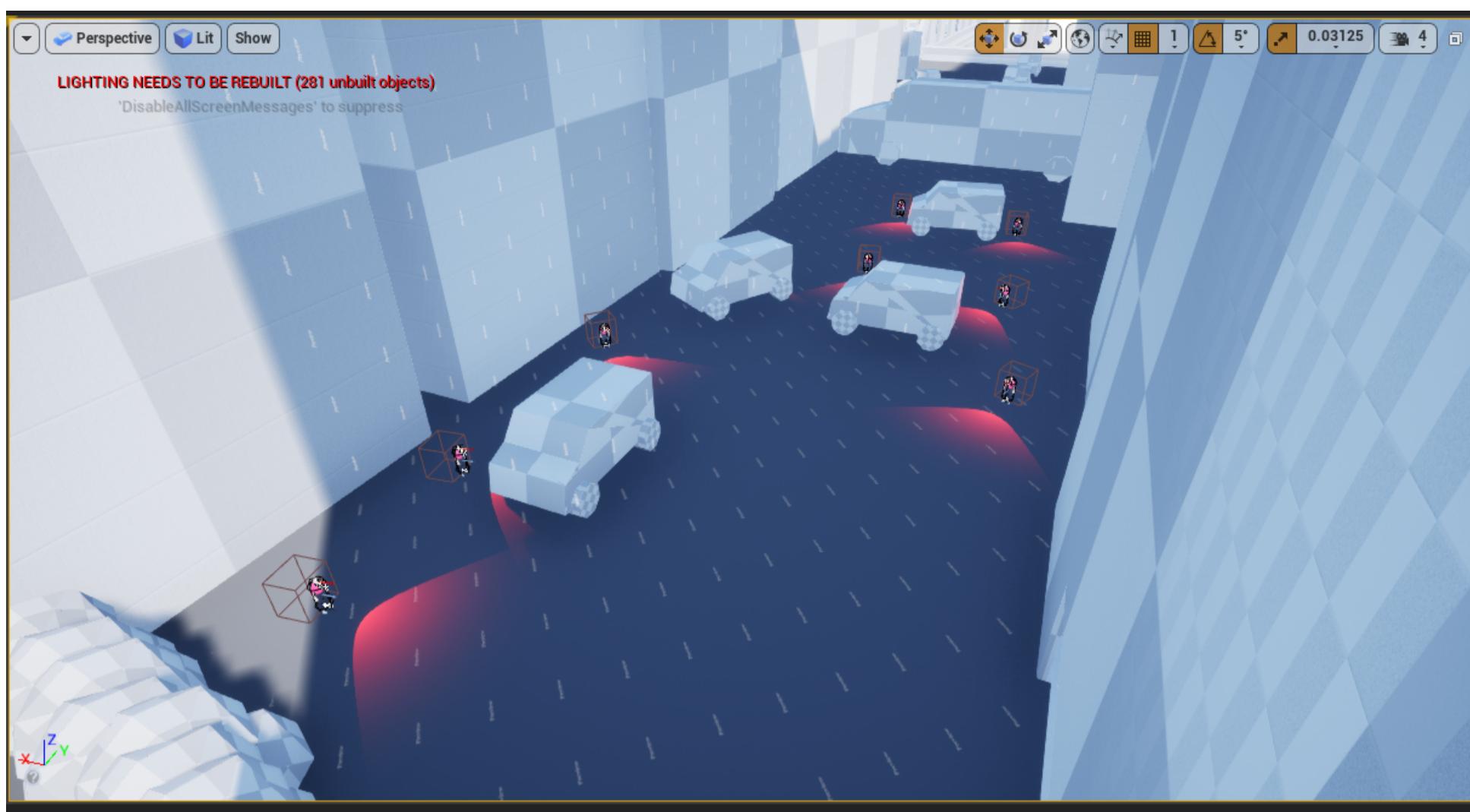
After the player has made their way across the roofs they then enter the hospital building in the level, in here they need to find a health pickup as the drop from the building has caused injuries to them. The first iteration of this section was very bare and involved all the rooms being open which made the level feel very empty and blank. It was made this way originally to test how well the player would respond to the light guidance inside the building.



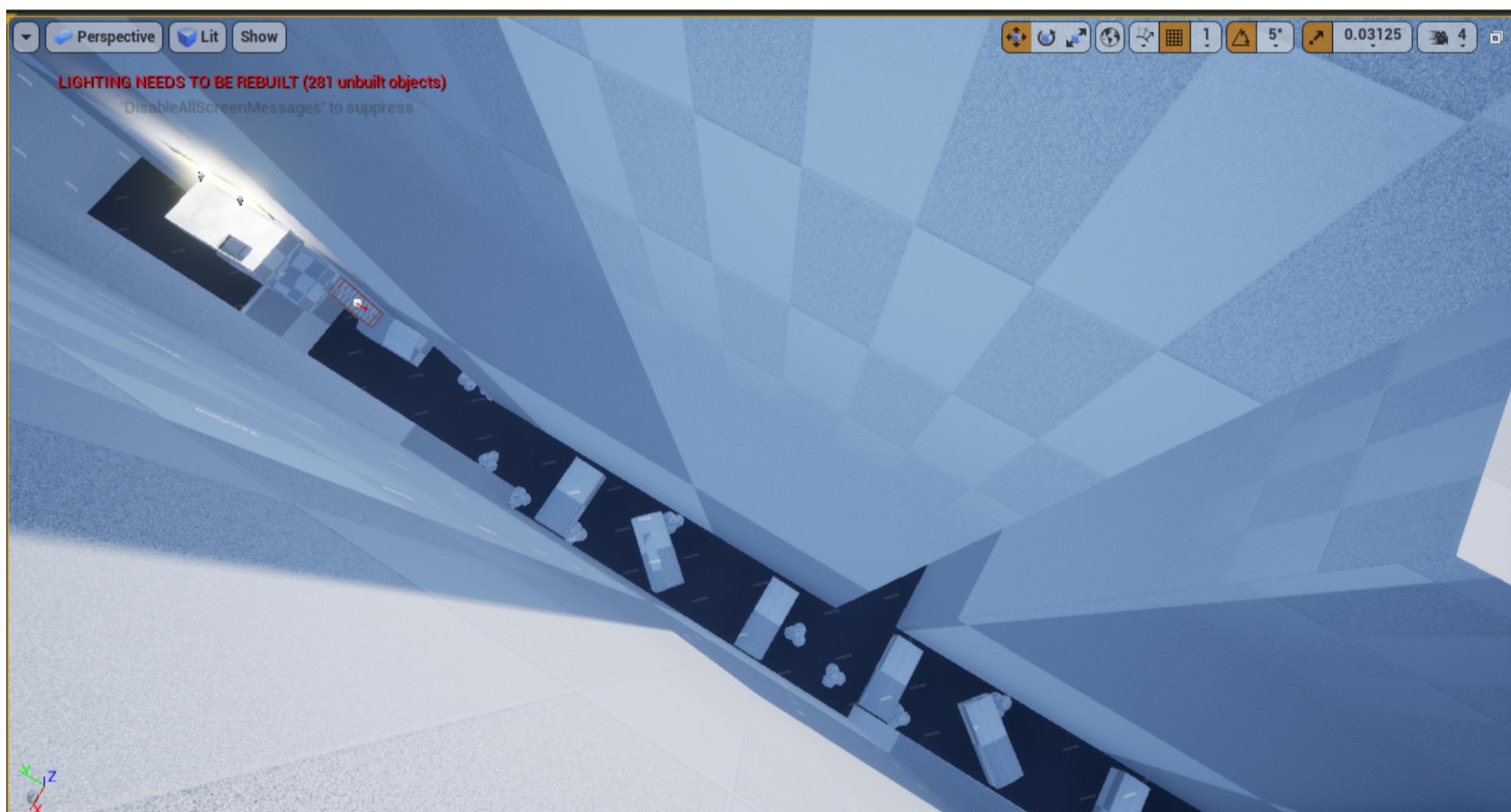
Once the player has made their way through the main hospital building, they then need to make their way down the elevator shaft which was just another simple platforming section.



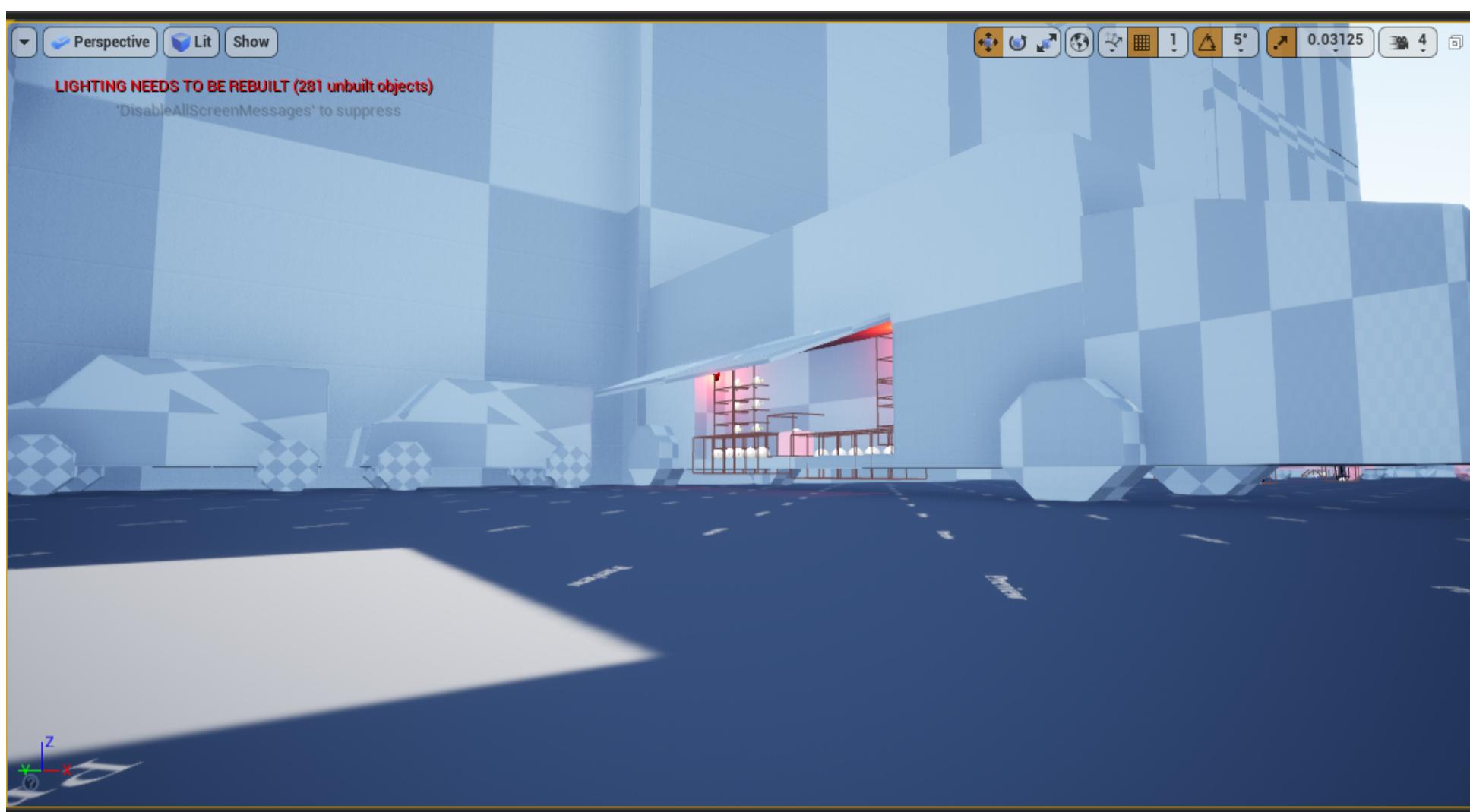
The player then reaches the bottom of the elevator shaft and exits the building to find a group of enemies waiting for them outside the hospital. They need to fight their way through the enemies to reach the alley behind the building across the street.



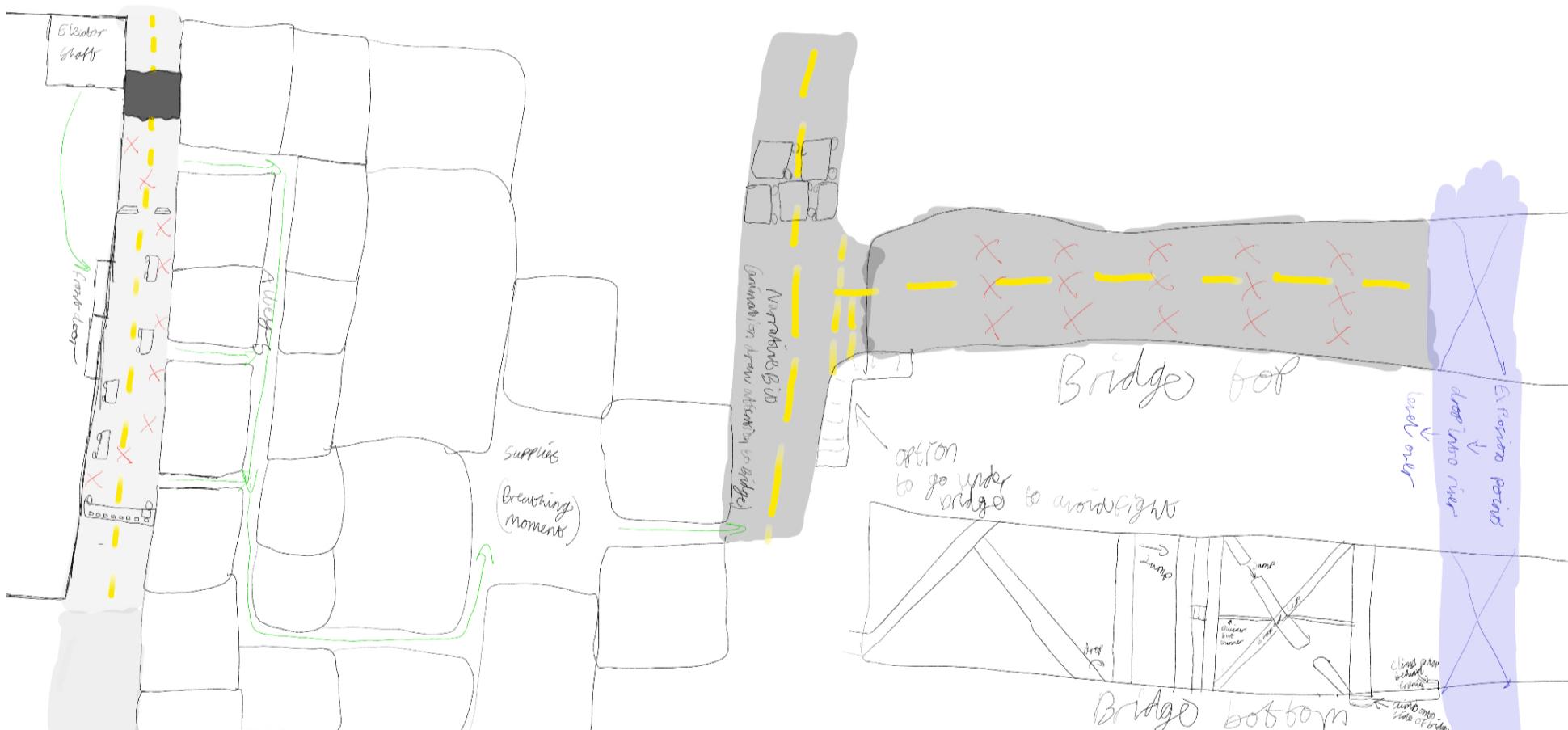
Upon successfully fighting through the enemies, the player should make their way to the alley across the street, in the alley they need to climb over the obstacles and climb up over the blockade using the fire escape.



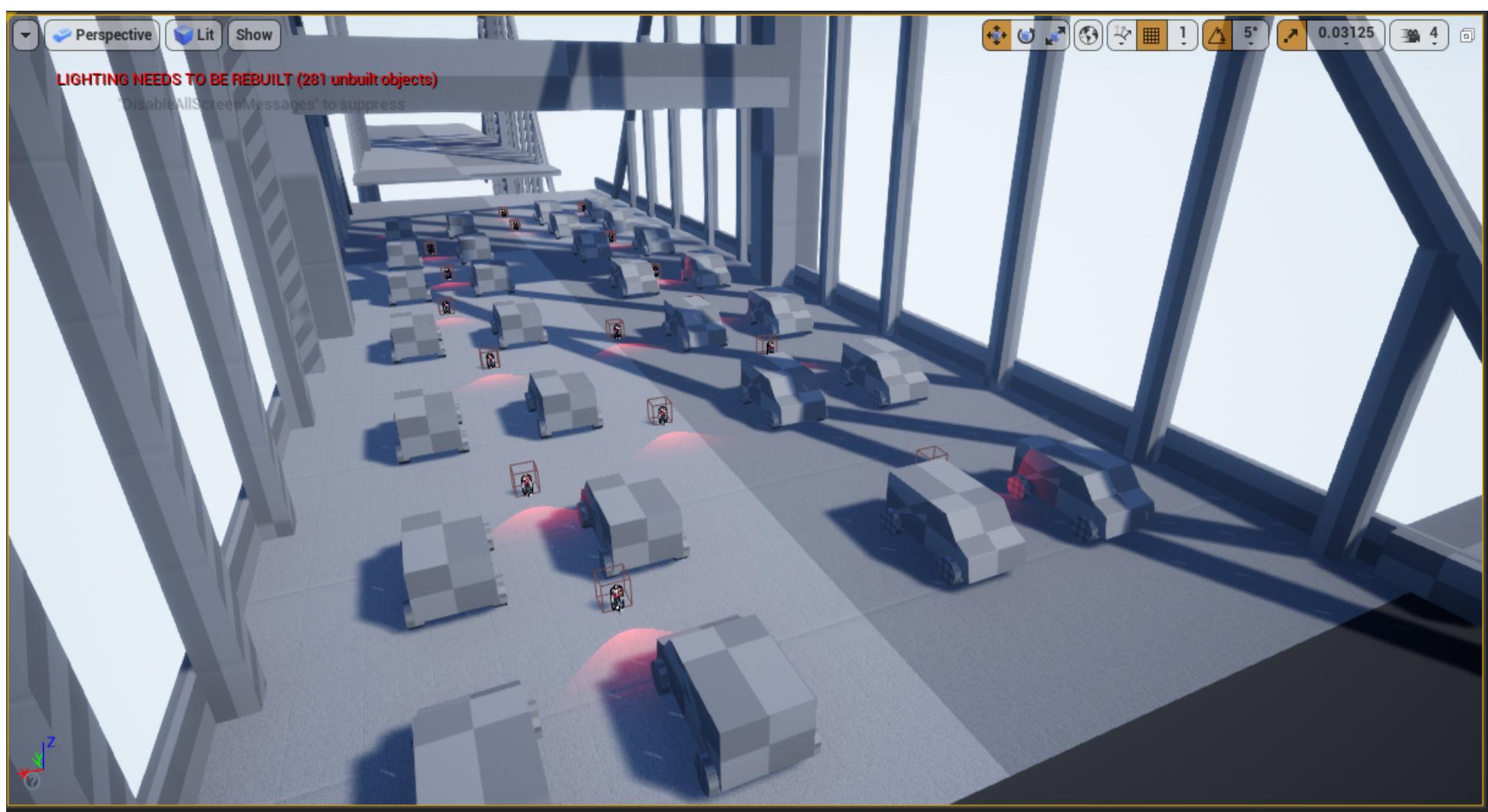
The player will then find a truck that has a bunch of weapon and ammo pickups to prepare them for the last section of the level as there are a lot of enemies to fight through.



Due to difficulty with scripting skills with unreal engine 4, it was then decided that instead of the car chase segment, the ending of the level would be the player making their way across a bridge full of enemies. Due to this change in plan, a new sketch was made to plan how this segment of the game would be laid out.



Once the player has picked up the ammo, they should then make their way right where they will reach the last section of the level is the fight across the bridge to the end of the level. This is supposed to be the most difficult part of the level due to the amount of enemies they have to fight through, however due to a lot of cover points, they do have the option to either go in loud with the assault rifle or silently take out each enemy one by one.



PLAYTEST 1

After the first iteration of the level was complete, it was given to several people to test out in order to get feedback on what was good and what needed improving.

How fun was the level to play?

1 2 3 4 5

Really boring

It was a blast

What did you think of the scale of the level?

1 2 3 4 5

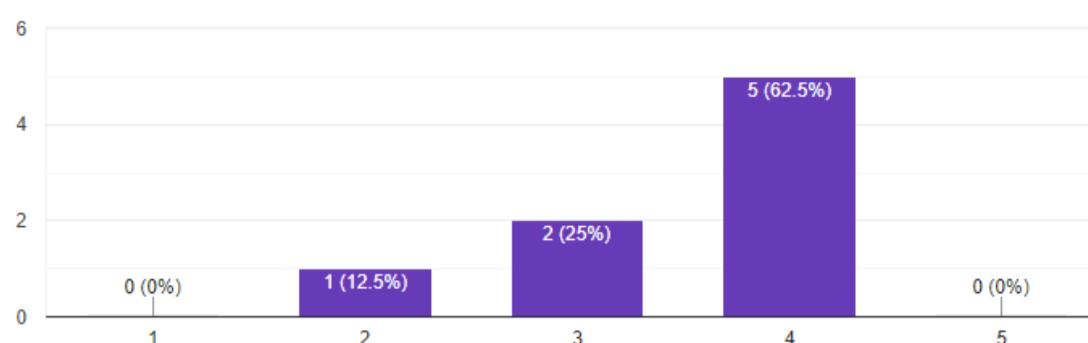
It was too cramped

It was too open

How fun was the level to play?

8 responses

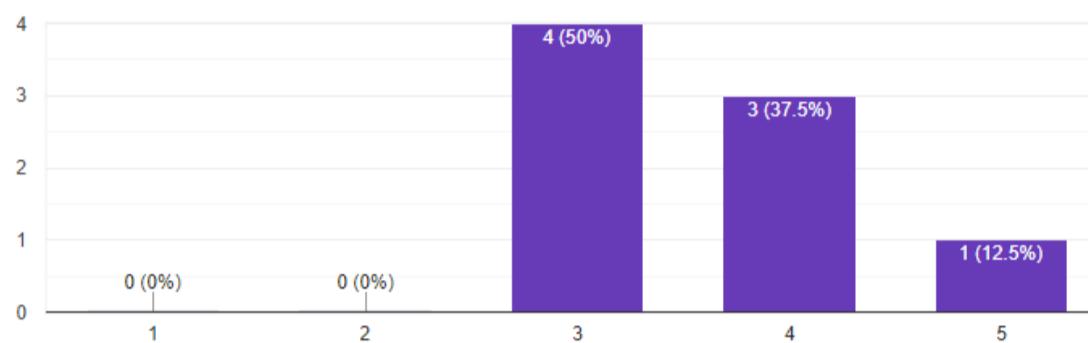
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What did you think of the scale of the level?

8 responses

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Based on the first questions in the feedback survey, it was clear that the level was too big and that the level wasn't incredibly fun to play. So from the beginning of feedback it was clear that the level needed to be made smaller and more features needed to be added to make the level more fun.

How difficult was the level?

1 2 3 4 5

Easy peasy Dark souls level hard

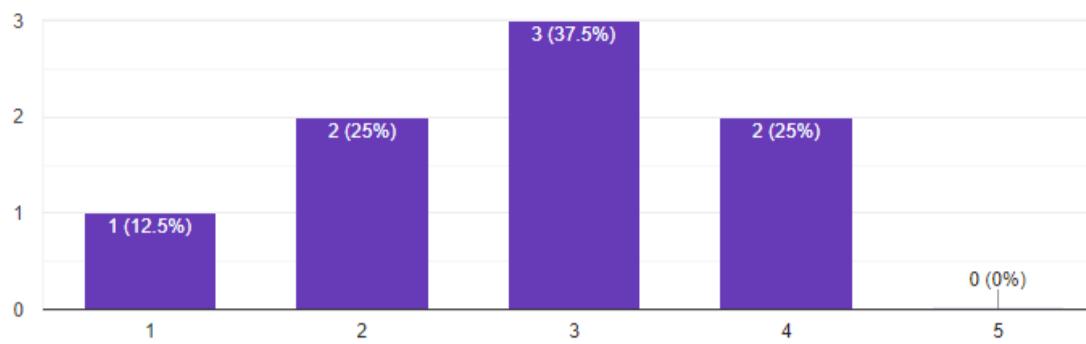
How did you feel about the amount of combat sections?

- There was too many
- There was plenty and they were fun
- There was plenty but they were a bit boring
- There wasn't enough
- Other...

How difficult was the level?

8 responses

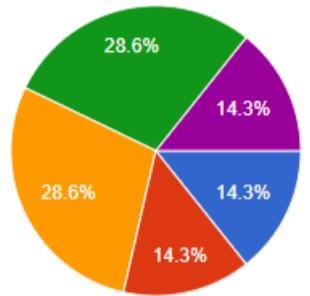
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How did you feel about the amount of combat sections?

7 responses

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- There was too many
- There was plenty and they were fun
- There was plenty but they were a bit boring
- There wasn't enough
- The amount was fairly good, however you can avoid like all the guards too easily (for example hug the wall on the right of the bridge) If you actually want the player to fight all the guards, I thin...

Based on feedback it was clear that the combat sections needed to be made more interesting to both keep the player engaged but also to add a bit more difficulty to it as the simplicity of the level made it easy to avoid the enemies.

Was it clear where you had to go?

- Yes
 No
 Other...

What did you think of the platforming section on the side of the building?

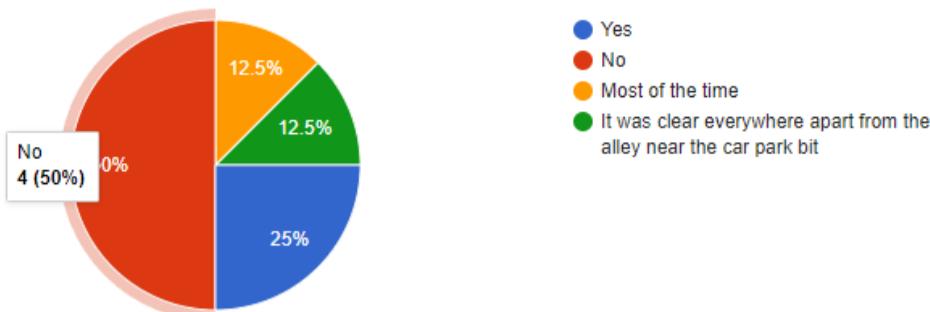
Long-answer text

Would you like to have seen a stealth section with the section inside the building?

- Yes
 No
 Maybe

Was it clear where you had to go?

8 responses



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What did you think of the platforming section on the side of the building?

7 responses

didn't see it

I thought that it was fun

Pretty fun! Felt high up and fair

It was good, the steps are a bit steep but I liked it, you could add some more jumps to make it a bit harder

I liked it, although some of the jump/fall heights seemed far too long

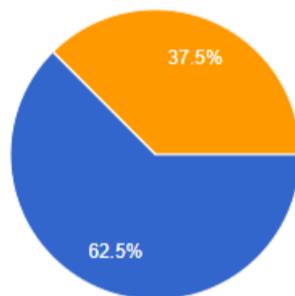
it was fun being able to parkour around the building and platforms

Far to fiddly, especially with the sprinting mechanic still enabled.

Would you like to have seen a stealth section with the section inside the building?

Copy

8 responses



It was then established that the level did not do a good job of guiding the player where to go, so it was decided that in the next iteration this would be one of the highest priorities when it came to improvements. However, it was also established that the building platforming was pretty solid, but the hospital section afterwards needed stealth with patrolling enemies as it was too boring to play through in its current state.

What did you think of the street combat section?

Long-answer text

What did you think of the alley section?

Long-answer text

What did you think of the street combat section?

8 responses

it was okay

It was fun but I wasn't always aware that I didn't have to kill everyone

Yeah it was fun trying to grab a couple of headshots on the way

Felt a bit empty, could have wider variety of objects there

I avoided this section in favour of the alley

You could avoid the guards too easily

it was a little easy as they all stood still, maybe some path patrol like the first level

Walked around it. Feel like that's not supposed to be a thing.

What did you think of the alley section?

7 responses

I liked it

A little cramped and unclear of where to go

The route could be shaped a bit differently, some smaller turns instead of mainly straight

It was good, maybe add some guards so you have to crouch behind dumpsters to avoid them, also i would have liked to see something at the top of the stairs at the end where the light is, maybe a pick up or a secret. You could remove some dumpsters since climbing over them over and over is a bit tedious

I didnt really know that you had to do the jump over the fire escape, it took me a while to figure out

confusing

Fiddly. Another jumping puzzle hampered by weird collisions and lack of coherent direction. Where do the stairs go?

It was then made apparent that the street combat was too easy to avoid, like the other combat sections in the level so it was decided that in the next iteration it would be given more cover and there would instead only be one entrance to the alley so that the player is forced to find a way through the enemies.

It was also made clear that the alley section was too fiddly due to how cramped with obstacles it was so it was decided that in the second iteration there would be less obstacles and the length of the alley would be reduced so that it wasn't too long and confusing.

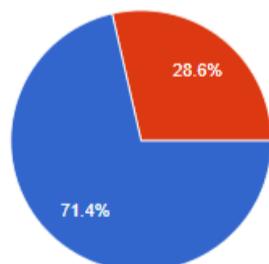
Did you find the weapons supply in the truck?

- Yes
- No

Did you find the weapons supply in the truck?

7 responses

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Based on this feedback, it was made clear that there needed to be more player guidance to draw the players attention to the supplies that were stored in the truck to help with the next section of the level.

What did you think of the bridge section?

Long-answer text

What did you think of the bridge section?

7 responses

Got minced as soon as I passed the second car. Lots of enemies

It was good, but again you could avoid every guard v easily by just hugging the wall on the right

enemy's were easy to by pass, and it was a little long

Good! Enjoyed the shootout there, I'd probably rotate some of the cars a little so it feels less ordered

Slightly too many guards, the size was good if there were more car types, and you could also colour them differently with the development coloured materials

I didn't realise that I could sneak past the guards until I'd killed them

I wasn't sure what was happening, you could just run to the right hand side and there are no guards to stop you

It was clear that the bridge section was too easy and repetitive with the environment so in the next iteration there would be more variety in the environment pieces and that the path either side of the bridge would be blocked off part way through so that the players are forced to go on the main section eventually, where they would then have to face enemies.

Would you like to see options for multiple paths?

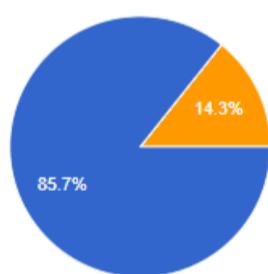
- Yes
- No
- Maybe

Any other comments?

Long-answer text

Would you like to see options for multiple paths?

7 responses



- Yes
- No
- Maybe

Any other comments?

5 responses

Remember the temper your scope. It's a big level (the scale might be off), so do you think you can populate it in an interesting way and keep it under 5 minutes?

Tres bon!

maybe more clear paths and routes so its less confusing

Cool! like the transition from level 1 to 2

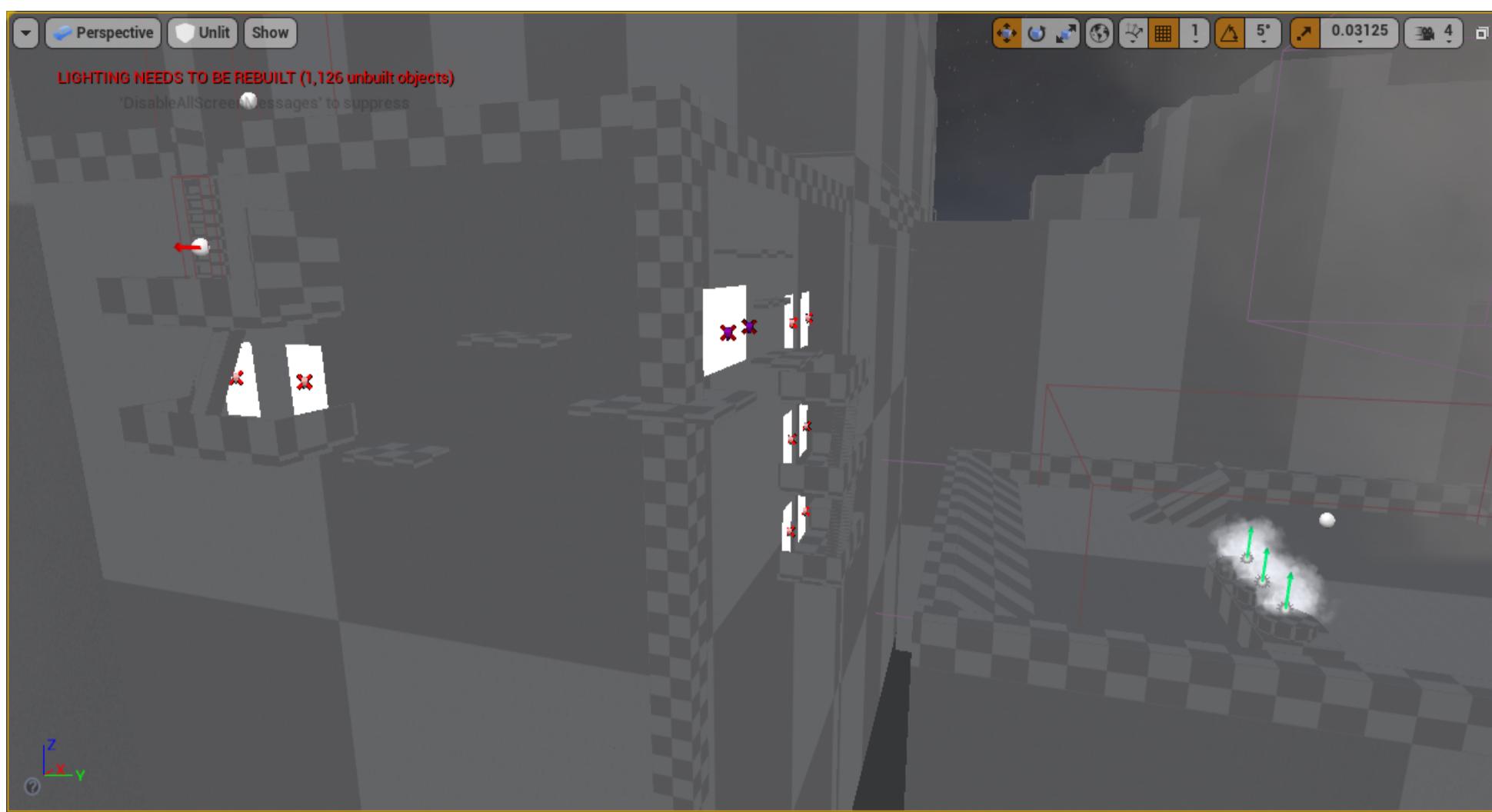
I think it was fun, in the building as you go down the elevator shaft it would be cool to have some open elevators doors with guards that can shoot you so you have to avoid their vision

At the end of the feedback, it was reinforced that the scale of the level was too big so that was made the highest priority for the second iteration.

LEVEL ITERATION 2

After gathering feedback on the first iteration on the level, development began on creating the second version of the level. The first thing done to the level was to decrease the scale of the whole map so that it didn't feel so open and empty.

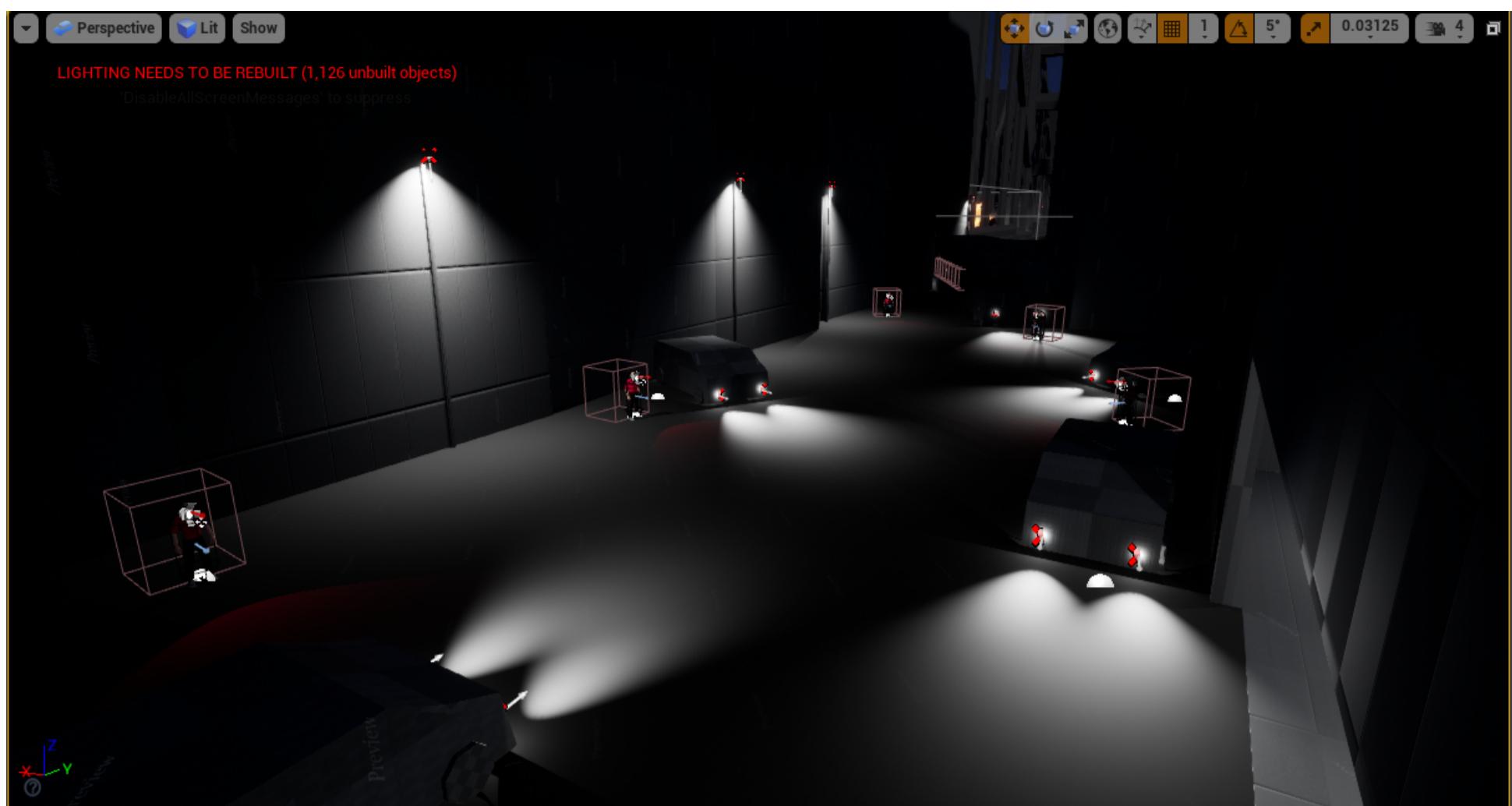
The next changes to be made to the level was to rework the rooftop platforming section. In the second iteration of this, the platforming was made more difficult and the lighting made darker to make it night as that was the initial vision we had for when the level should be set. Due to it being darker, lights were added to help guide the player in the right direction.



The hospital section was then the next area to be reworked. Based on the feedback given, it was decided that this section would be given cover points and patrolling enemies to allow you to sneak around it. Signs were also added to guide the player where to go as the guidance through lighting did not work well in the first iteration.



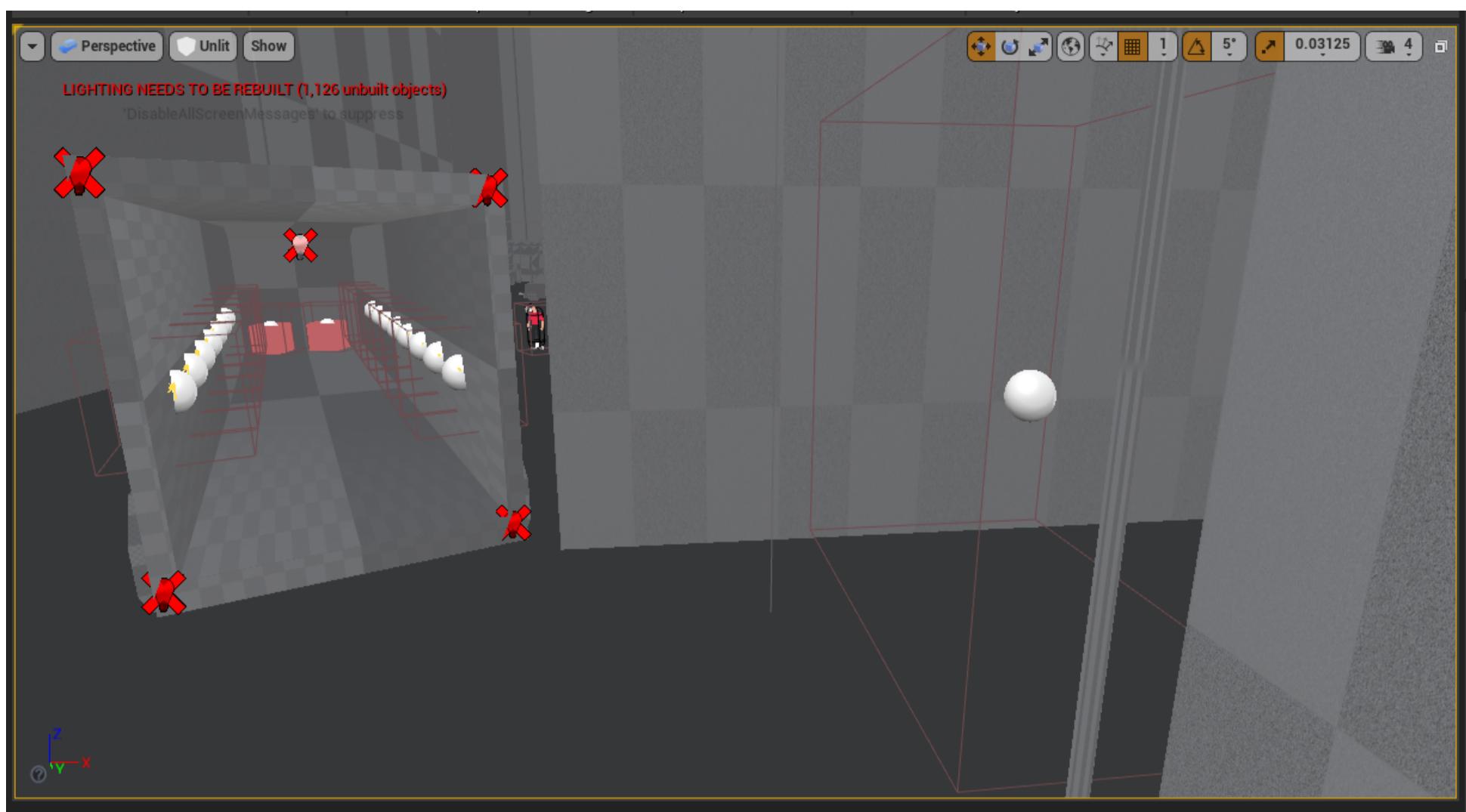
The elevator section was kept mainly the same in the second iteration of the level so the next changes to be made were tweaks to the combat section outside the hospital as it needed more lighting to guide the player and the cover needed to be resized and moved around to make the combat section more fun.



After changing the combat section in the street, the alley section was modified. For the second version of this, the scale was decreased and the amount of obstacles was greatly decreased as that was a key problem with the first version. Lighting was also placed in to guide the player with which way they need to go.



Due to some players not finding the truck with ammo in it after the alley section, the decision to move it closer and add a different color lighting to it was made in order to try and grab the players attention more.



The final section of the level was also heavily modified. For this section it was very clear that players found it boring and easy, so the bridge was reworked so that the obstacles were more interesting and that a story of some sort of collision that happened was being told there. The main struts of the bridge were also repositioned so that the paths on the side are cut off half way across and they need to go onto the main bridge section to avoid the section being too easy. The scale of the bridge was also made more narrow when the map was rescaled so that it isn't as open and empty.

