

User Testing Document – Portside

Thomas Meere

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Playtesting

Testing Plan

For testing the map, I plan to do 3 Methods of testing. This includes:

- Bot testing
- Closed Group Sessions
- Anonymous Lecture Testing

Bot Testing

Testing will involve Bot Testing, where both human testers and bots will engage in rough testing and gameplay. This process aims to identify critical errors on the map, uncover potential issues, such as camping spots, experience defending and capturing points, and instances where bots might behave unexpectedly, like snipers taking surprising positions. However, this form of testing, while helpful, will not be the sole method utilized for this project. It will serve as a tertiary approach, as the primary focus will be on player-centric testing and feedback.

Closed Group Sessions

Closed Group Sessions will entail playing with a smaller group, combining human players with bots to fill in the gaps in TF2 matches. These sessions will enable direct observation of gameplay, allowing for iterative improvements based on observations. Subsequently, participants will complete surveys and engage in small group interviews to gather more personalized and direct feedback, serving as a secondary form of feedback.

Anonymous Lecture Testing

Anonymous Lecture Testing will involve gathering an anonymous group to play-test levels during classroom sessions, exclusively pitting player vs. player matches to replicate traditional TF2 gameplay. The sample size for these tests will range from 5 to 12 players per match. Post-game, players will fill out questionnaires to evaluate various aspects of the map. In this form of testing, the aim is to gauge how new players approach the map without any influence from the map creator. While there will be no direct involvement during gameplay, there will be observation and collection of footage for later analysis. This will serve as the primary form of feedback.

These three ways of testing are bot Testing, Closed Group Sessions, and Anonymous Lecture Testing. Will give us a full picture of how the map can be better. The focus is on what players think and feel while playing. Each method has its own job in helping us make the map to the highest standard.

Collecting Data

Throughout the project, I'll focus on gathering two types of data: Quantitative Data and Qualitative Data. Both are crucial and bring different insights, so it's essential to strike a balance between them to ensure a comprehensive understanding and high-quality feedback for the project's improvements.

Quantitative Data

Quantitative Data involves numbers and measurable metrics like player kills, deaths, time taken to reach a point, or rating the map on a scale of 1-10. This data is vital as it offers a clear, numerical view of what a specific percentage of people think without ambiguity. However, it lacks the depth of personal opinions and experiences, which is where Qualitative Data steps in.

Qualitative Data

Qualitative Data will come from interviews designed to encourage testers to share more detailed experiences while playing the map. Questions might delve into specific aspects they liked or disliked about the map, opinions on class strengths, clarity of hazards like water, and more. These open-ended questions allow testers to express opinions beyond simple yes or no answers. While qualitative data can provide rich insights, it's important to note that responses may vary widely and need careful consideration during analysis.

Testing Results will be a culmination of both types of data. The addition of quantitative and qualitative findings will guide the iterative process, allowing for adjustments that address both statistical trends and nuanced player experiences.

Questionnaires

Questionnaires will be filled out and will be custom-tailored following each big block of iterated design for the next group of testing. While questions will overlap and be used again, problems that have already been solved will not need to be asked constantly.

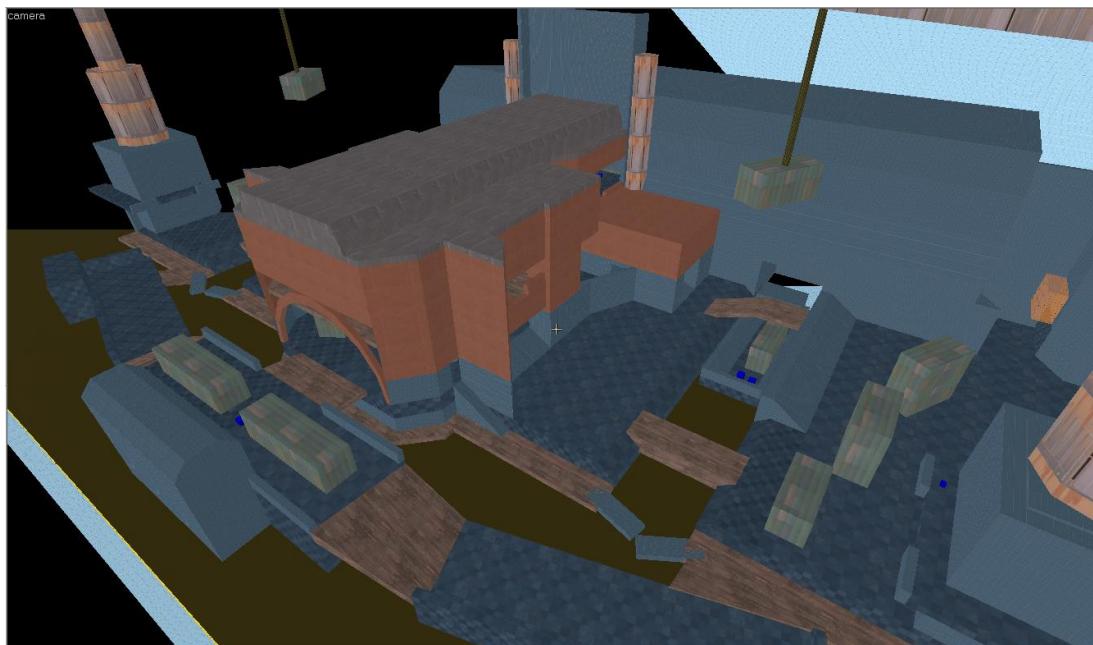
Finding this balance is important in testing as we do not want to “Forget” an issue. Here below are the phases of questions for each feedback session.

Testing Results

Feedback Session 1 Questions

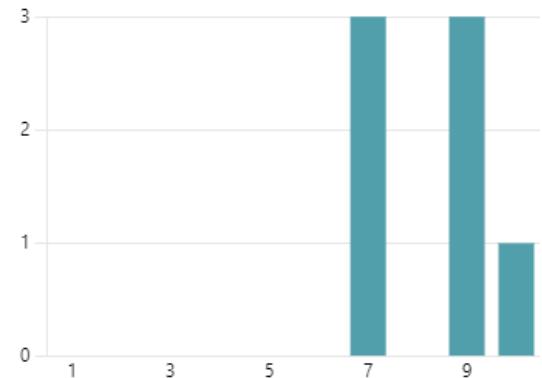
#	Question
1	On a scale of 1-10, how much did you enjoy the map overall?
2	What Class did you play mostly?
3	Did your class feel catered for on the map?
4	How many kills did you get in the match?
5	Did you get more or less than expected
6	What was your favourite section of the map, and why?
7	What Was your least favourite section of the map, and why?
8	Rate how lost you felt on the map
9	From best to worst, rank which classes were the best
10	Did you Encounter any exploits, glitches, or bugs with the map?
11	Is there anything you would consider adding to the map?

With my initial set of testing, I collected a total sample pool of 10 people to test my initial blockout. From my initial testing, I looked at gathering some general data and getting some rough feelings on how people felt the map design was. This included a mix of quantitative and Qualitative data.



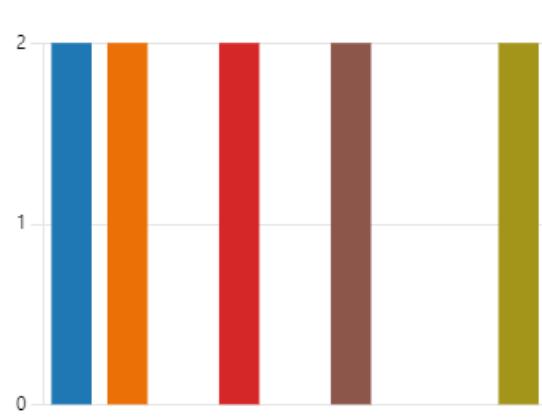
On a scale of 1-10, how much did you enjoy the map overall?

With a combined rating of 8.29, I am happy with this initial result collected, this shows the map is an enjoyable experience which is the core goal of this Multiplayer Design Assessment. With all results being above 7 the next goal in the next iteration of testing will be trying to push these results higher than the last set. While 10 responses are helpful it is also not a large enough data pool to make confirmed assumptions on the map so I will need to keep this in mind



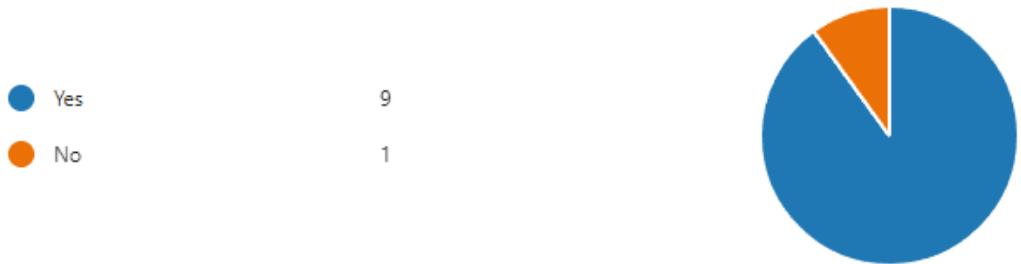
What Class did you play mostly?

Scout	2
Pyro	2
Soldier	0
Demo	2
Heavy	0
Engineer	2
Medic	0
Sniper	0
Spy	2



Looking at the results from the pool it is an equal split of classes being mostly played, this is good to see more than one class being predominantly popular as it shows there is no set Bias to one class, what would be interesting to see later down the line is if we get any medic, snipers, heavy or soldier players, I hope to see this as it will prove players want to play this class on the map and that it's not the Data pool sample size.

Did your class feel catered for on the map?



With this result 90% of the players stated their class feels catered for, with these results and the class breakdown sheet above this shows the map incorporates elements that are good for all classes. Looking at the ID for the No result the player that said no to feeling catered was a pyro player. I will look at tweaking the map a bit to get more action in for Pyro on the map.

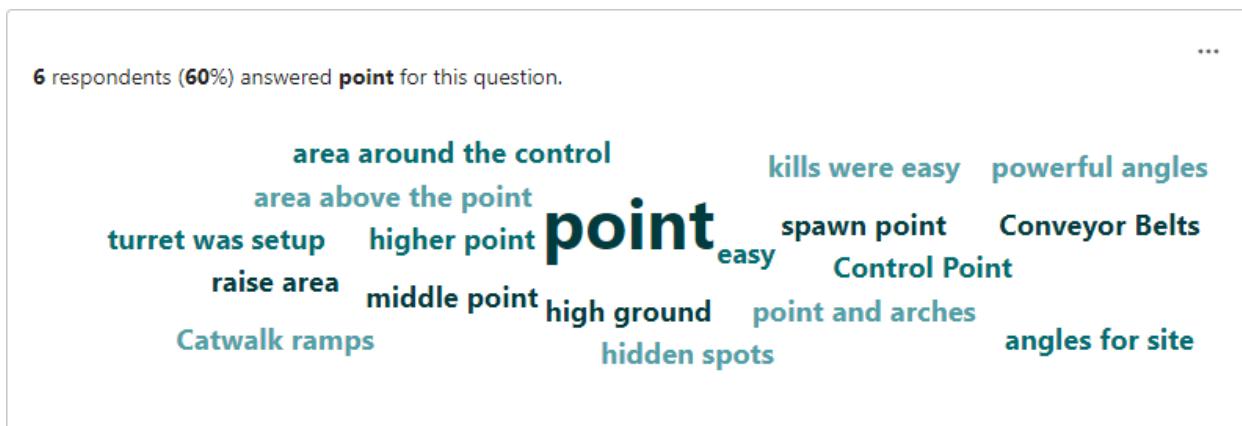
How many kills did you get on the map / Was it more or less than expected?

Kills	Was it More or Less than expected
17	More
65	More
15	More
22	More
20	Got the right amount
10	About average
15	The number was an educated guess
11	The same
3	Around what I normally get
N/A	More

Looking at the data there is a decent range of kills players got while playing on the map, going all the way from 3 to 65?! With these results, the average came out to 19.78, with it being rounded up to 20 Kills. I'm happy with this average but also unsure what is a normal amount for a TF2 game, I will investigate this. The player that got 3 kills was a pyro player, this proves again I may need to make it easier for pyro players. The other data set also asks about whether the kills they got were more or less than they usually get, with this the data says More or average amount as expected with no results saying less.

What was your favourite section of the map and why?

#	Response
1	Conveyor belts because it create interesting, powerful angles for site
2	The raise area about the point. Was really easy to jump behind the enemy
3	The high ground that overlooked the objective
4	Catwalk ramps, kills were easy to achieve once turret was setup
5	middle point and arches around it
6	Control Point
7	The point as it was very contested and fun
8	Defending the spawn point felt good
9	I liked the area around the control
10	the higher point and more hidden spots



The next question looked at what the players favourite section was and why, for this I looked at presenting a word cloud. With the word cloud the larger the word the more people stated that thing. With this most results came to the higher ground areas and the control point; this is a good thing to hear as it shows people aren't likely something like the spawn point and only camping around it. Hearing this data tells me as a designer not to drastically change these aspects otherwise this result could change.

The other thing to consider would be trying to make the lower sections more enjoyable since no answer for this was in this question.

What was your least favourite section and why?

#	Response
1	I would have to say the left side of the map where boats are supposed to be as there isn't much in terms of cover or anything really over there
2	The dock area with the wooden boards. Never used it once.
3	The right area for me as I was against the high ground
4	Ships, there was no real incentive to play in that area
5	outside areas
6	Approach from spawn
7	the far left (from reds perspective) as it felt empty and disconnected from the rest of the map
8	There was a section to the right of the map away from the high ground I didn't see used
9	The part that just walked me straight into water
10	there wasn't a least favourite section but i do think pickups would be better

4 respondents (40%) answered **area** for this question.

...

wooden boards **pickups would be better incentive**
left side of the map **rest of the map section to the right**
terms of cover **map favourite section**
reds perspective **high ground** **area** **right of the map** **far left**
Approach from spawn **right area** **dock area** **disconnected from the rest**
outside areas **water**

Following the good sections of the map I looked at seeing what was bad with the map. Almost entirely said they did not like the boat section of the map. This came down to it feeling disconnected and the little incentive to go to that section of the map. With this I could always add more health pickups or ammo to this area, but I don't think this would incentivise more play in this area, this comes down to it being the lowest part of the map and going almost takes you away from the control point. While this section saw no play it also doesn't mean it's a bad thing on the map, this section gives players another option to go should they need.

Regardless of this I will look at either removing this section or trying to incorporate it more into the framework of the map somehow.

Rate How Lost You Felt on The Map

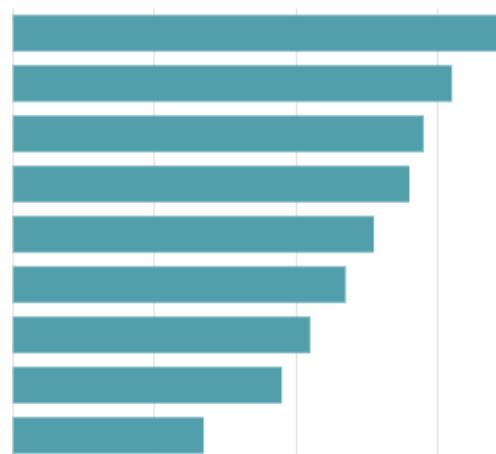
Very lost	1
A bit lost	1
Fine	8



For this data I looked at how lost players were on the map, 80% of entries stated they were fine when playing in the map, with 1 entry being a bit lost and another very this shows the design of the map is mostly okay. One thing I will look at doing on the map is adding in some signage and arrows and decals on the map this should push the confused player to understand the map better.

From best to worst which class was the best

- | | |
|---|----------|
| 1 | Demo |
| 2 | Engineer |
| 3 | Soldier |
| 4 | Sniper |
| 5 | Pyro |
| 6 | Scout |
| 7 | Heavy |
| 8 | Spy |
| 9 | Medic |



For this data I looked at players ranking which classes were the best and the worst. While we want to cater to all classes on the map there will always be a stronger character for certain maps, I will keep this data in mind when doing anything further with the map.

Did you Encounter any exploits, glitches or bugs with the map?

4 respondents (40%) answered **No** for this question.



Looking at this data the results gathered are great. with the data I was worried people would exploit the map with things like rocket jumps, the data presented showed that people only would light cracking through where meshes were not snapped to the grid properly.

Was there anything you think should be included or is missing?



The last important part of data I looked at collecting was general points of feedback, from the data gathered here it came down to 3 things. Those being:

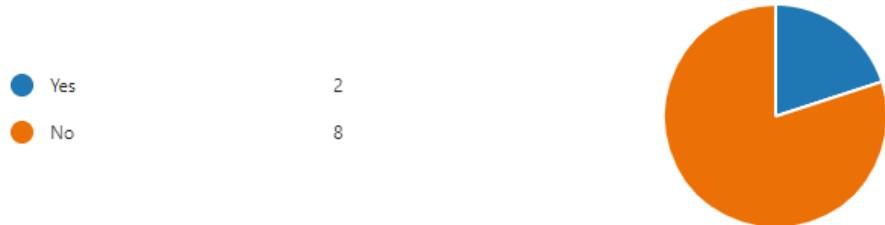
- More Flanks
- More Pickups
- More Cover

Feedback Session 2 Questions

#	Question
1	Have you played the map Portside before?
2	If the prior was yes, has the map improved from when you last played?
3	If you've played this map before, did you like/notice the removal of the boat section?
4	On a scale of 1-10, how much did you enjoy the map overall?
5	What Class did you play mostly?
6	Did your class feel catered for on the map?
7	How many kills did you get in the match?
8	Did you get more or less than expected
9	What was your favourite section of the map, and why?
10	What Was your least favourite section of the map, and why?
11	Did you use all parts of the map at least once?
12	Did any snowballing or Spawn Camping happen?
13	Rate how lost you felt on the map
14	From best to worst, rank which classes were the best
15	Did you encounter any exploits, glitches, or bugs with the map? If so, what?
16	Do you feel anything is missing from the map, do you think should be included?
17	Please state any other general comments below



Have you played the map Portside before?



For my data, it stated that 2 people played my map prior. This came down to my project being tested by Group 1 initially and Group 2 now. This is good in two ways. This is great because the 8 results came from people who have a fresh experience of playing the map this will help to give more raw first-time experience. It also helped with seeing how new players would play on the map. The 2 people who have played the map before can give a more tailored experience in results and can tell me what they like from the new iterations and what they do not.

If the prior was yes, has the map improved from when you last played?

#	Response
1	Map has improved, has more visibility less confusing paths and the point is less open

2	Definitely, you don't fall in the water immediately!
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For the two people who played the map, both results had a positive answer to the map. This is good to hear and tells me that the map at minimum has not gone down in quality. While two results from this aren't enough to form a set opinion on this it's a good thing to see that improvements have been made to prior issues stated by Responders.

If you've played this map before, did you like/notice the removal of the boat section?

#	Response
1	It makes more sense for the map to not have it as no one was using it anyway

Following removing the unused section on the map players were more satisfied with the removal of an unused section on the map, while it aesthetically made sense with the map it didn't cohere with TF2 and common multiplayer design, with it being far away from the control point and the 4th channel no one would use this lane of play, this rectification made more sense.

On a scale of 1-10, how much did you enjoy the map overall?

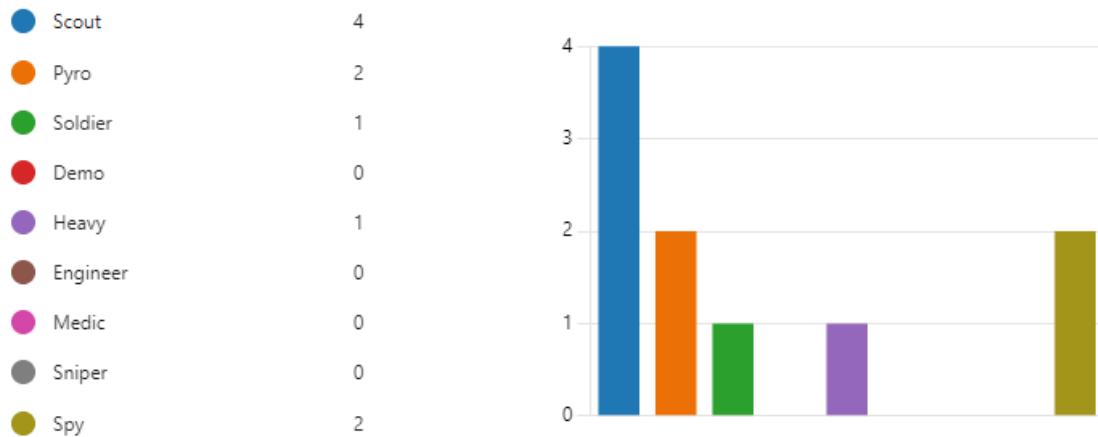
For the next set of data, I looked at how much people enjoyed the map overall. Looking at the spread of data we got:

- 2 Respondents - 6
- 1 Respondents - 7
- 4 Respondents - 8
- 2 Respondents - 9

With an Average Rating of 7.67, I am happy with this result so far, while we always want to strive for a 10 in-game rating we cannot always make the perfect map, following this feedback, I will look at pushing all data to a minimum of 7 up for the final iterations of feedback. What is more important is looking into why the lower ranked results say the results they did.

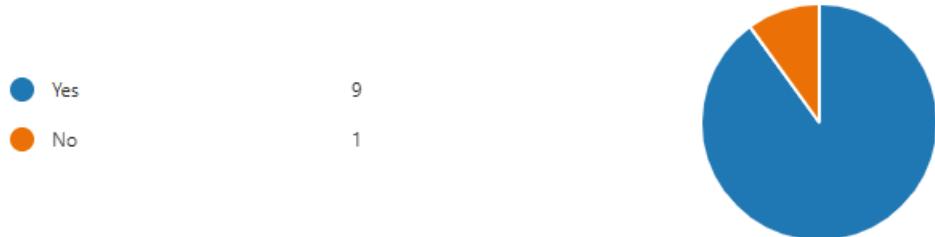
#	Response
1	6
2	7
3	6
4	8
5	8
6	9
7	8
8	8
9	9

What Class did you play mostly?



Looking at the data for the classes that were played it contrasts with the last set of feedback data, Prior there was more emphasis on Heavy, Demo, Solider, and Pyro. Seeing Spy's and Scouts shows that the map is at the minimum playable and enjoyable for more than a set few classes.

Did your class feel catered for on the map?



The prior data leads onto the next point of Did your class feel catered for, looking at the data only one person said they did not feel catered for on the map. The person playing this class was one of the spy players, this contradicts what another spy player said about this data question. I will investigate this further.

How many kills did you get in the match?

The next data set looked at how many kills the players achieved. With the data, we had a range of results from as low as 3 all the way to 25 kills. Taking the average for this data it came out to 12.1 Kills or a 12-kill average per player. This result is lower than the initial testing at around a 17 average per game. This could have come down to a range of factors, such as time played on the map before victory, Player characters chosen, and Skill level. Looking at this I will try and find a way to possibly increase this number without drastically altering other factors on the map.

Did you get more or less than expected?

More	3
Less	0
Average	7



#	Response
1	25
2	12
3	3
4	10
5	9
6	8
7	19
8	20
9	3

The next information the survey looked at was the kills more or less than expected for the map, so far 70% said average while 3 said more. I am very happy with this result as it shows no one felt left out on kills or found they were struggling to achieve kills. This shows that the map isn't over tuned with too many or too few. I will be careful about changing the map flow as this is currently at a good map kill equilibrium.

What was your favourite section and why?

#	Response
1	top high ground looking at point, was easy to farm point kills
2	the capture point
3	The capture point - it was fun, had a range of playstyles, and wasn't too easy nor hard to keep
4	could loop the objective and enemy spawn using the high ground to backstab
5	Control point, multiple methods of entry and good verticality
6	top window, its overpowered
7	The right at the edge exposed area and the high ground around the point
8	Capture point felt easy to retake and to hold at the same time.
9	The main control point as there's a lot to keep track of which is engaging.
10	The area around the Control Point

1 respondents (10%), **multiple methods** window ground around the point
 point kills area
range of playstyles high ground **point** Control point lot to keep track
 objective and enemy easy capture point
 methods of entry good verticality point - it was fun

The next set of information looked at what players like on the map and why. Looking at the data almost all players said the control point and surrounding high-ground parts next to it were their favourite bit. This is a result I am pleased with as it should go for all KOTH maps that the control point should be the most engaging and active part of the map, while this is positive I will look into getting more interest in the other sections of the map as we don't just want one section to be fun be the map universally IE Improve engagement in the boat sections if possible.

What was your least favourite section of the map, and why?

colorscheme line of sight High ground
 1 respondents (10%) spawn Blue spawn leftmost side of the map
 water instakills **water spawn** control point
 tad OP map accidentally falling
 getting close capture point overlooking point
 heavy damage river and dying nooks and crannies spawnpoint building

#	Response
1	all the nooks and crannies, too much to look at when moving through the map
2	the death drops
3	From the Blue spawn, the route on the leftmost side of the map. It just didn't feel as fun
4	no indication the water instakills
5	Route from spawn directly to control point, sightlines could see you from distance, you could take heavy damage or die before getting close to the control point
6	spawnpoint building, it is confusing color scheme, make it neutral
7	exiting from spawn and accidentally falling in to river and dying.
8	High ground above the capture point, it was really easy for soldiers to peek and hide.
9	The upper overlooking point on the control point feels a tad OP as it's not always in line of sight.
10	The section near the water, though i still liked and used it

Looking at the negatives of the map players commonly stated 2 things. Those being:

- Water being a death zone and falling in. Or not expect it to be a death pit
- High ground being "a tad" OP with soldier classes.
- Long Sightline down the core path to the Control point

These are all great points that need to be integrated on. In the past TF2 Commonly used water as a swimming element in some of the maps. I should look at improving from this via the use of signs, overlays, and more guidance to players to say it's a no-go zone.

With the high ground elements, players said they had a lot of cover to play with making them peak and shoot making it harder to deal with, I may look at making the high ground view more limited or making it more exposed and easier for people to shoot up onto.

With the long site line going down the core channel of play, I may look at adding some more Protection just to make it a tad bit safer, while this has been considered I must remember it is the core path on entry, and thus should have the most conflict on it.

Did you use all parts of the map at least once?

●	Yes	5
●	No	4
●	Other	1



The next data point we looked at was whether people used every part of the map at least once. The results were a bit mixed. Almost half of the participants used all the areas, but four people didn't. It could be due to various reasons, but I can't really control how players choose to play the map. Maybe I should think about giving more clues to encourage those players to "explore" that area.

Did any snowballing or spawn camping happen?

●	Yes	0
●	No	9
●	Other	1



Another point I looked at covering was did any spawn camping snowballing occurred. With no people saying Yes, I am happy with this result. From this data, there is nothing more to infer from it for now. Other than the spawn points are in a good place for now. This could change with different games with other people so I will need to consider it.

Rate how lost you felt on the map.



With this data, I covered how lost players felt on the map. From last time more players have now said they felt a bit lost when on the map. This is something I don't want to see. To improve this issue, I will look at adding some more meshing and overlays to improve the navigability of the map. Maybe even use the use of lights to encourage where players go.

Did you feel anything is missing from the map or you think should be included?

#	Response
1	no
2	Think its pretty good in terms of features and buildings
3	Lighting
4	No
5	Nope
6	More Pickups
7	Nope

Another thing I looked at adding was asking what should be included. With almost everyone saying no. 2 People said more lighting and some more pickups. With not many people saying pickups, I will be cautious with what extra stuff I add to the map.

Did you encounter any exploits, glitches or bugs with the map? If so, what?

#	Response
1	no
2	The spawn door for my spawn had a no entry sign even thought it was my spawn but it didn't affect me
3	Nope
4	No
5	Window above the control point is overpowered
6	None
7	Water has a texture issue on the screen when you fall in

For the final pieces of information for this, I looked at asking people what glitches or issues they've found. With people saying Spawn Door Overlay issues, Water Texture Issues, and Window Point Power. I will look at fixing or improving these issues presented.

Please state any general comments below

#	Response
1	was a cool map but there's just too much going on
2	good map
3	I thought it was a very good map - with a tiny bit of polish I would have thought it was an official map!
4	keep it up
5	The right side of the map where you can see the enemy spawn felt too exposed for enemies that were trying to get to point area, I believe some cover is needed to prevent sniper from putting pressure from so far away
6	I really enjoyed this one, deserves to be a Community Map

The last thing I looked at covering was just asking for some final points on what people thought, for the most part really good feedback all around. I will look at trying to improve some of the critical points before the next testing session.

Feedback Session 3 Questions

#	Question
1	How many times have you played the map Portside?
2	If the prior was yes, has the map improved from when you last played?
3	If you've played this map before, did you like/notice the removal of the boat section?
4	On a scale of 1-10, how much did you enjoy the map overall?
5	What Class did you play mostly?
6	Did the high ground feel, overpowered or fair and easy to retake?
7	Did you like the position of the control point?
8	Did any class feel more overpowered than the rest? If so who and why
9	How many kills did you get in the map
10	Was it clear water can kill you
11	Was the level of health packs and ammo to a good amount and location
12	Did the rough meshing make sense and look good
13	Did you use all parts of the map at least once
14	Did any snowballing or spawn camping happen?
15	Rate how lost you felt on the map
16	Does the map cohere with TF2 mechanics and level design?

17

Do you feel anything is missing from the map or do you think should be included



How many times have you played the map Portside before?

#	Response
1	3
2	2
3	4
4	5
5	3
6	3

With all the testers on the final iteration of player testing all responders had a minimum number of times played of 2. This was helpful as it would allow players to give a response in comparison to the last time they played to see if it has improved. This also helps to give a more custom response tailored to the finer details of the map.

If Prior was yes, has the map improved from when you've last played?

#	Response
1	Yes
2	I can't remember if I played this map before
3	Major Improvements compared to the last time I played it

4	The map has been iterated upon excellently, with each new iteration improving upon the last. Its been sick seeing this map develop
5	Yes, Map has been improved a bunch since I last played, was really fun
6	Its improved

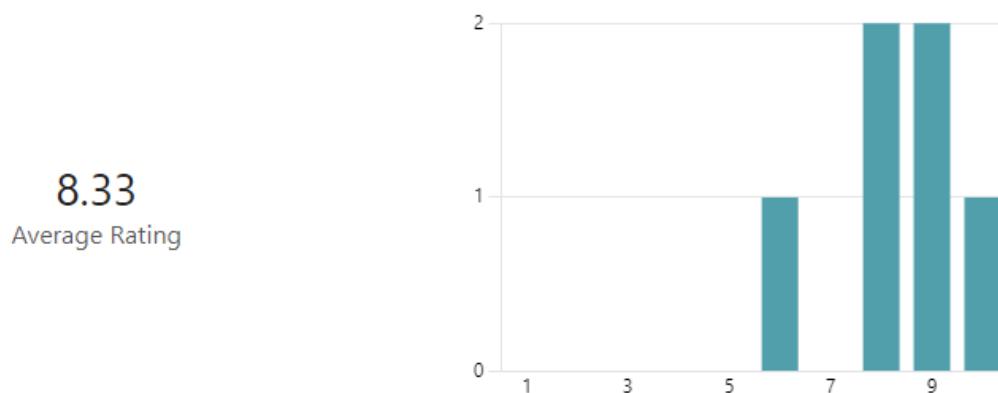
Overall, all players were happy with the improvements and stated in some aspect the map has improved. This is great to see as it shows at the bare minimum the map hasn't gone down in quality.

If you've played this map before did you like/ notice the removal of the boat section?

#	Response
1	Didn't notice
2	Yes
3	I liked the removal of the boat section because I think barely anyone played around that area
4	The boat section was arguably the least needed area for the map which is ironic given its name. The map is better off without it as it did not really offer much in terms of advantages nor did it foster firefights
5	Yes, I noticed it was gone I never really used it so I didn't bother me
6	Yes, I liked it gone

Following on from removing the boat section on the map I asked players about their thoughts on it, hearing players either not mind it being gone or happy its gone is great as it shows the map has worsened but arguably improved. This section of the map was diverting player attention by being a 4th channel of play.

On a scale of 1-10 how much did you enjoy the map overall?

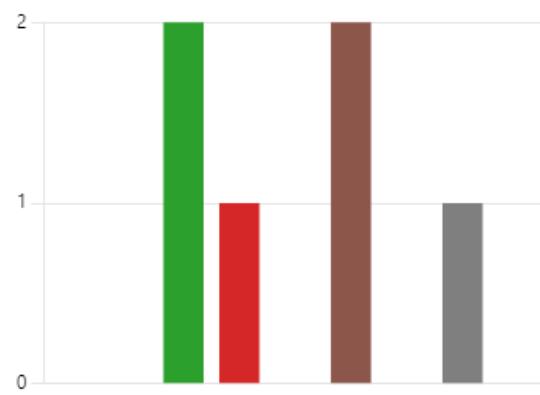


For this question, I asked again how players found the map with a rating of 8.33. I am happy with this result as it's the highest rating I have received for the map so far. This proves the iterated process has not been for naught, while it's impossible to get perfect scores it is great to see a high score.

5. What Class did you play mostly

[More Details](#)

Scout	0
Pyro	0
Soldier	2
Demo	1
Heavy	0
Engineer	2
Medic	0
Sniper	1
Spy	0



For this question, I mostly wanted to see the range of characters chosen Aswell as what people mostly played to see how they responded to the upcoming questions. From this data I found a nice range of picks going from soldier to engineer and even sniper. This is good as it shows all classes can be played on the map and feel viable.

6. Did the high ground feel, overpowered or fair and easy to retake?

[More Details](#)

●	Overpowered	0
●	Fair	6
●	Other	0



Going on from the last point I asked about the power of the high ground, following changes to the window frame making it more exposed players stated the thought the high ground was fair, which was great to see, it tells me that the height is a balanced component to the map.

Did any class feel more overpowered than the rest? If so who and why?

#	Response
1	Yes because I could rocket-jump around the map
2	I don't think so
3	No classes felt overpowered for me
4	Not at all
5	No everything for the game I played felt fair
6	I found it fine

Going on from the prior point almost all players had no feeling of one classes being overpowered, aside from one respondent which said rocket jumping was. While rocket jumping is strong on the map it is also a risk to do with the positioning of the health packs on the map and the amount they give back. While players can go around the map a lot, they also risk dying by being in critical health.

How many kills did you get in the match?

#	Response
1	2
2	10
3	30
4	25
5	17
6	18

Looking at the responses for kills on the map kills were in a nice range going from as low as 2 to as high as 30, while two isn't a great number the general range has stayed consistent with other results collected prior showing the map has drastically changed the flow of how many kills a player could get. I am pleased with the results presented.

10. Was it clear water can kill you?

[More Details](#)

- Yes 4
- No 1
- Other 1



Following adding more signage to the map I asked people about the clarity of the water being able to kill them. Almost all respondents said it was clear it could kill them beyond one person, this is great as almost all players prior were confused that they died when they went in, adding more walls in helped with preventing accidental deaths Aswell.

Was the Level of health packs and ammo a good amount and location?

#	Response
1	Could be more
2	Also yes
3	Think there was a fair amount of health and ammo packs
4	Yes
5	As an engineer player the ammo packs were good

Looking at this data, players stated they were either fair or to a good amount, this is great as it shows the map has a suitable amount for most players, especially for characters like engineers who depend on this for the map. When designing the location of the kits for the map I tried to make the pack amount restore smaller the closer you got to the control point. This was done to prevent the control point from being too easy to hold. For this I also kept the kits to the low around the spawns to prevent spawn camping from occurring.

Did you use all parts of the map at least once?

13. Did you use all parts of the map atleast once?

[More Details](#)

- Yes 3
- No 3
- Other 0



Looking at this data point, over half the players did not use all parts at least once, while this is a shame some points do need to be considered. For a match time of around 5 mins, players will not be able to play all characters and styles. Furthermore, while I can't compress the map anymore without drastically changing the design, I'm glad I removed the boat section for this reason.

14. Did any snowballing or Spawn Camping happen?

[More Details](#)

●	Yes	0
●	No	5
●	Other	1

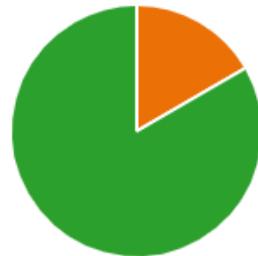


For this question, as I final check I asked players did they get spawn camped or snowballed, with all players saying no I was happy with the outcome of this answer.

15. Rate how lost you felt on the map

[More Details](#)

●	Very lost	0
●	A bit lost	1
●	Fine	5

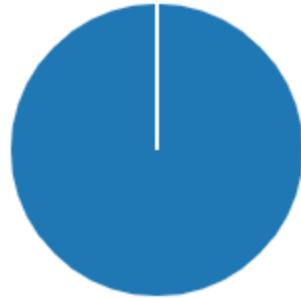


For this I once again asked did players felt lost. This was post signage and meshing so seeing almost all players say they felt fine with the navigation and one player being a bit lost is great to see.

16. Does the map cohere with TF2 Mechanics and Level Design

[More Details](#)

- Yes 6
- No 0
- Other 0



With 6 People stating the maps coheres with TF2 mechanics and level design I am happy with this answer as it shows the map has not left anyone with a negative experience, while this doesn't mean this map is perfect as a map can always be improved it shows this map doesn't fail as tf2 map.

Here below is some closing thoughts people stated

1	anonymous	NA
2	anonymous	Overall, I don't think that there is anything missing from the map as it is perfectly balanced in my opinion
3	anonymous	I want a sign to commemorate conveyors. Other than that, no
4	anonymous	Really fun map, I loved the improvements made

Changelog

Level Iterations

Undocking – Core Pillar, Point of Conflict

When designing the lower section of the map, I explored the idea of expanding the interior space.

Initially, this area was intended to remain open, but I found that this design left it too exposed, favouring characters like snipers. To address this, I considered the addition of walls and a raised catwalk to improve gameplay in this region, ensuring it accommodates various character playstyles.



Figure 1, Initial Undocking Design

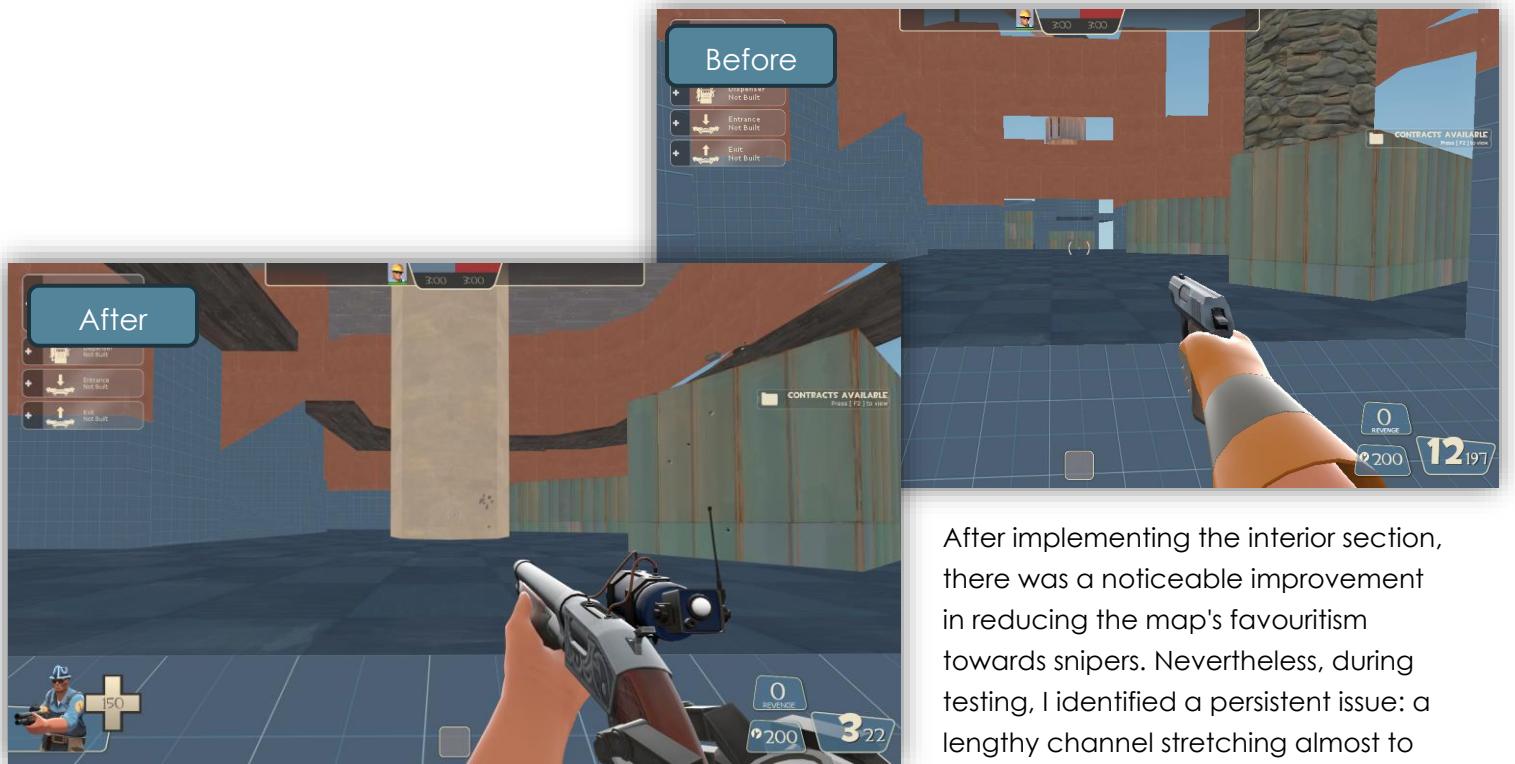


Figure 2, Undocking Design with Catwalk and Pillar

After implementing the interior section, there was a noticeable improvement in reducing the map's favouritism towards snipers. Nevertheless, during testing, I identified a persistent issue: a lengthy channel stretching almost to both spawns. To address this, I considered relocating the central pillar to restrict long-range shooting while maintaining an open layout for the map.

Snipers – Strength in Distance of Play



Figure 3, Crane Tower Control Point View

When conceptualizing the control point area of the map, I aimed to promote diverse gameplay and incentivize players to explore various approaches to the map. To achieve this goal, I considered incorporating sightlines for sniper players from their respective crane towers, providing them with a strategic advantage. This addition would require opposing players to take flanking routes through the lower sections to effectively counter this sniper-centric strategy.



Figure 4, Control Point Defender View

Not only can players shoot out from the control point, but they can also shoot into it. Although it may be more challenging to do so because of the location's characteristics, this dynamic introduces multiple points of conflict beyond the central channel, enriching the gameplay experience.

Following the implementation of this sightline, I considered enlarging the window to enhance visibility and create additional shooting angles. This adjustment is expected to enhance gameplay, although further player testing will be conducted from this vantage point to ensure its effectiveness.



Figure 5, View of Defender



Figure 6, Old Conveyor Entrance View

While designing the elevated section of the map, I noticed that it had a focussed and engaging appearance, but it left players feeling overly exposed when departing from the spawn area. This vulnerability stemmed from the expansive sightlines. After conducting tests and gathering feedback, I addressed this issue by introducing crates that offer protection as players exit the spawn. This adjustment increased the forgiving nature of the map.



Figure 7, New Conveyor View

Control Point – Points of Approach

During the design of the capture point, I focused on providing multiple entry points to the site. In this iteration, there are currently four distinct methods for approaching the site, which seems to offer a satisfactory variety of entryways based on initial testing. At this point, I am not considering the addition of more entry points as it would likely be unnecessary.



Figure 8, View of Control Points

OPEN CONTROL POINT MANY ANGLES OF APPROACH ENGINEER NEST ABOVE OVERLOOKS CONTROL POINT



Figure 9, View of Engineer Nest

When designing the high ground around the control point, I took measures to partially obstruct the tower's view. The goal was to prevent any single player from having an excessive advantage in this elevated position. To achieve this, I added pillars to cover the left and right chokes, obstructing the player's line of sight. However, players can still have visibility of these sightlines if they jump onto the ledge. This approach introduces a tactical trade-off, as it provides improved sightlines but also increases the player's exposure to potential threats.

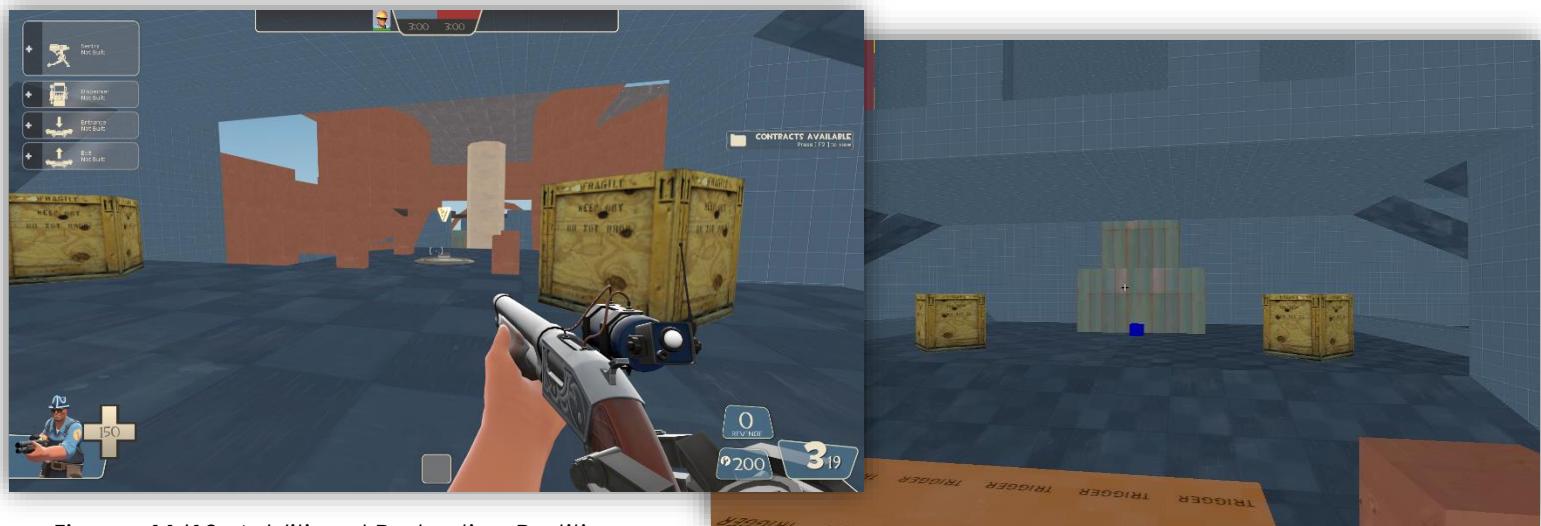


Figure 10, Original Exposed Control Point

After addressing the spawn-related concerns in the high ground channel, my focus turned to the issues surrounding approaching the point. Despite the substantial entrance to the site, it remained excessively open, leaving little manoeuvrability for those on the point and providing an advantage to those on the high ground.

To remedy this, I concentrated on incorporating additional cover throughout the control point area.

This addition enhanced the flow of the map, providing players with more opportunities for protection and manoeuvring, ultimately balancing the gameplay experience.



Figures 11/12, Additional Protection Partition

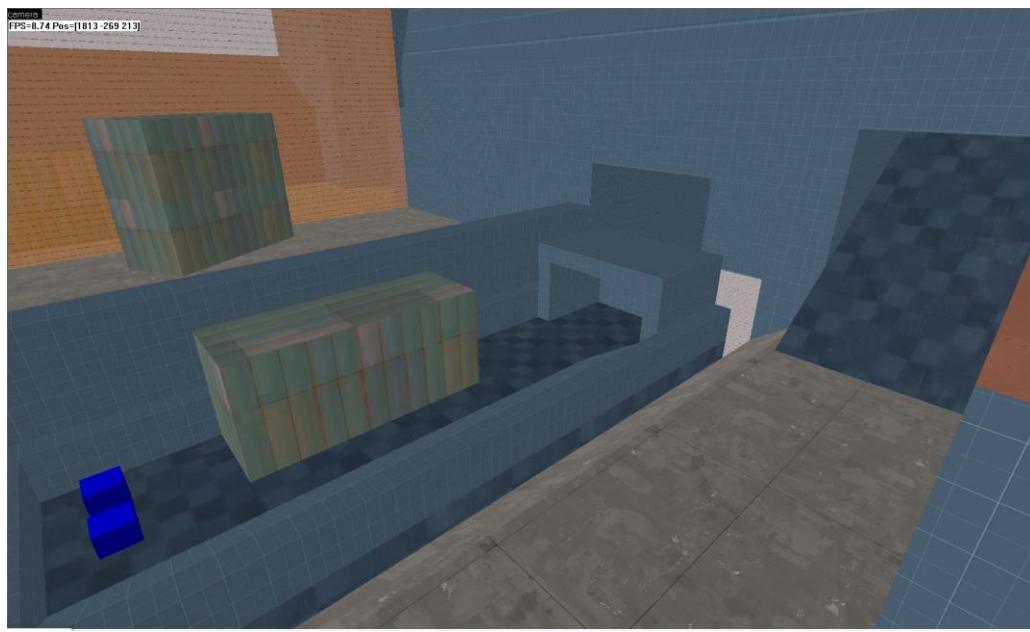


Figure 13, Canal Section Before

For this adjustment, I considered incorporating a bridge in the canal section. Initially, this change was intended to address pathing issues for AI reaching the point rather than being a player-focused modification. However, after implementing this change, I noticed that it significantly improved the map's flow for players.

I decided to keep this alteration because it seemed illogical to require players to jump and parkour around on boats to access the most central path to the point. This improved map feels and smoothness.

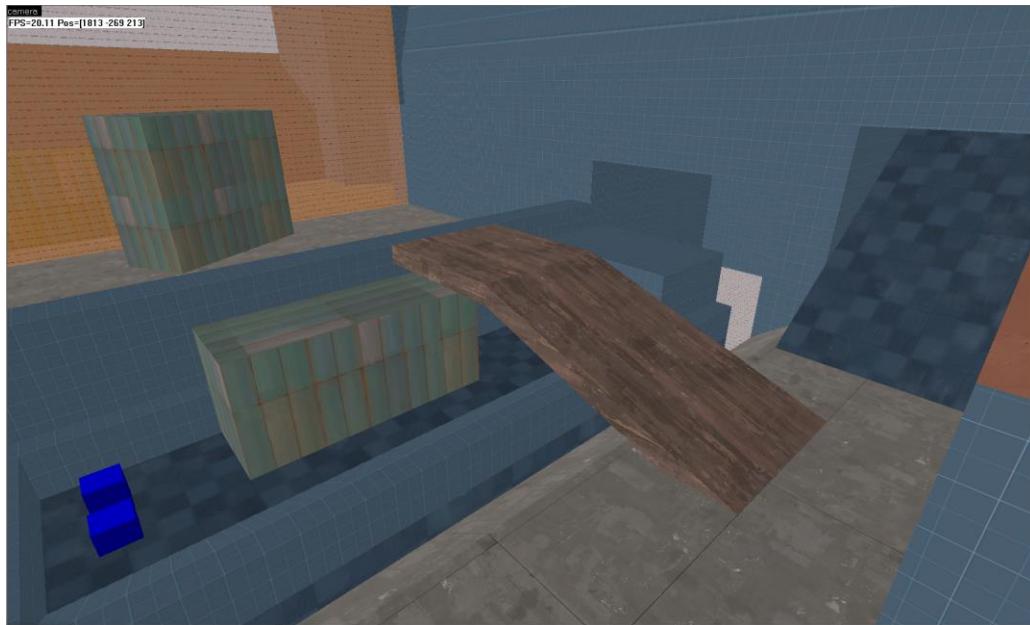


Figure 14, Canal Section with Added Bridge Connector



Figure 15, Turret Window

Following my last improvement, I started by adding a turret window to the catwalk. It allowed players up there to keep an eye on and maybe even take out opponents coming from the bridge. This adds more excitement and engagement on the Undocking Lane. While this is a great addition it is important to consider keeping it balanced for the attackers leaving spawn by adding additional protection in the form of cover. This will prevent spawn killing and keep it fair.



Figure 16, Position from the Window

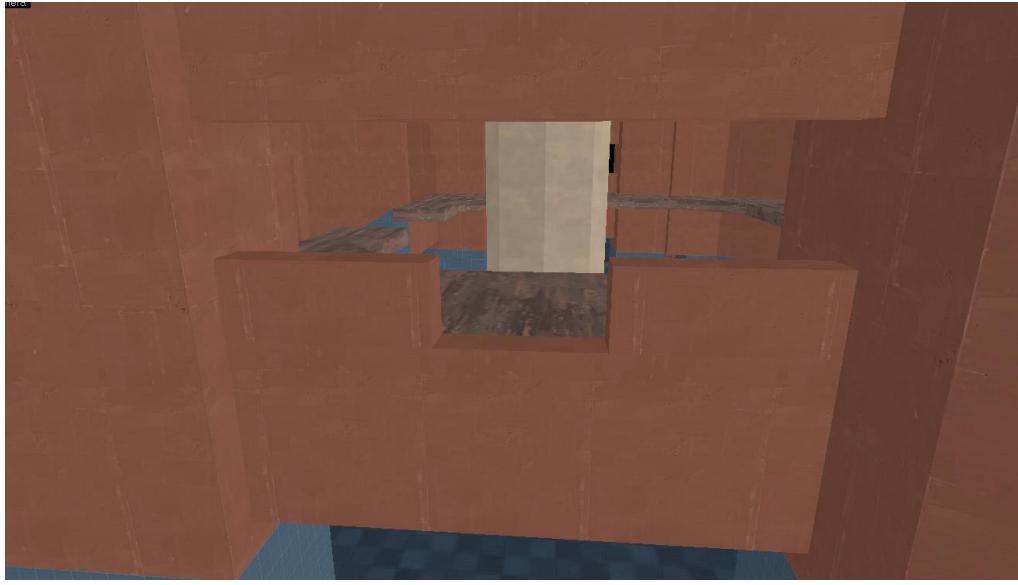


Figure 17, Turret Before Modification

After implementing the turret, testing feedback suggest the need to achieve better balance for the attackers. To address this, I introduced a backboard to the turret position. This modification allows soldiers and demoman to target the area more easily with their explosives, while also affording a bit more protection to the defending players holding the catwalk. This enhancement should help level the playing field and contribute to a more equitable gameplay experience.



Figure 18, Turret with added backboard



Figure 19, Exposed Spawn Sightlines

After conducting further player testing and exploring the map, it became evident that there were some spawns kill locations that were not in line with the intended design. To rectify this issue, I incorporated additional crates with varying heights to ensure that no spawn point would be subjected to immediate attacks, thus improving the overall fairness and quality of the gameplay. This improved the players buffer zone.



Figure 20, Added Cargo Containers



Figure 21, Elevated Position

During the iterative design process, I considered introducing an elevated high ground location to enhance the vertical dimension of the map. However, while working on this, I observed that it left the player's back exposed to the spawn areas, making this spot less secure. An issue that I've just become aware of is that the choke point is overly exposed from this high ground position. It may be necessary to implement additional blocking or cover in this area to limit the extensive sightlines provided by this spot. Player testing will ultimately help determine the most appropriate adjustments to ensure a balanced and enjoyable gameplay experience.



Figure 22, Mid Ascent Choke Point

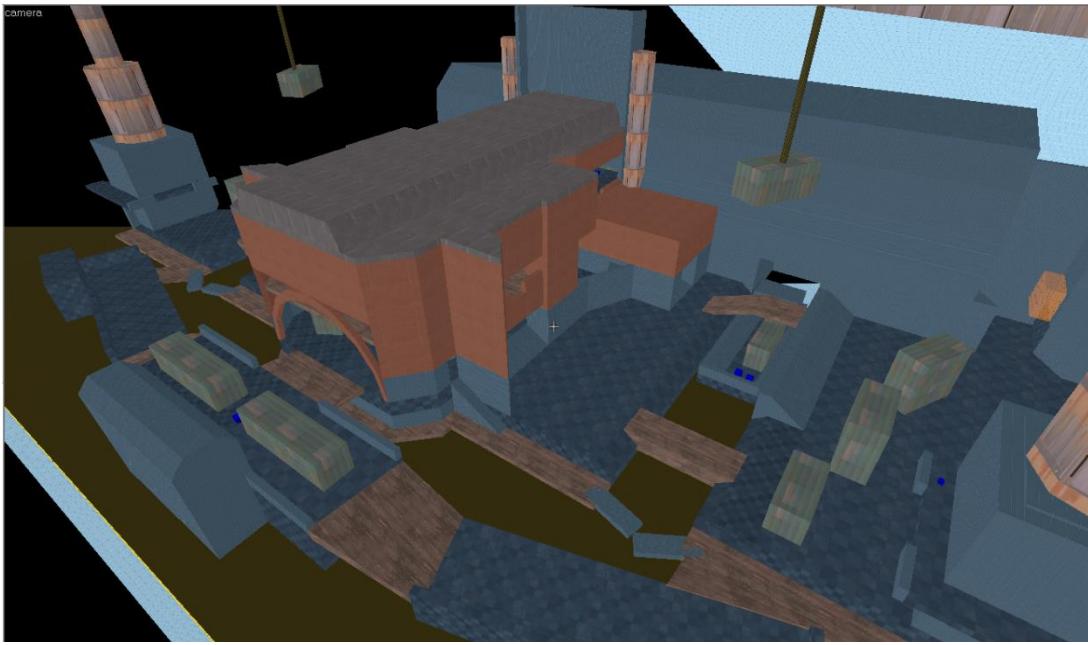


Figure 23, Gameplay render

One aspect that requires attention is the need to provide more incentives for players to take the longer boat flank route. Currently, there might not be a compelling reason to choose this path. To address this, I'm considering the addition of more ammo and health packs in this section, as well as creating alternative paths of entry to the control point from that direction. These changes should encourage players to explore this flank and make it a more viable strategic option during gameplay.



Figure 24, Waterside Channel Renders



Figure 25, Sniper Sightline of Control Point

Based on player feedback and my own playtesting of the map, I have decided to address the issue of insufficient cover around the control point from the conveyor point section. The problem arises from players being able to use the ramps leading to the high ground for "peak and shoot" tactics, which were not originally intended for this map. This unintended gameplay style was frustrating, as it prevented players from reacting effectively to quick "pop in and out" tactics.

To rectify this issue, I have introduced a wedge at the end of the ramp to prevent players from using it in this unintended way. This adjustment helps with keeping it fair while not altering the sniper nest position above.

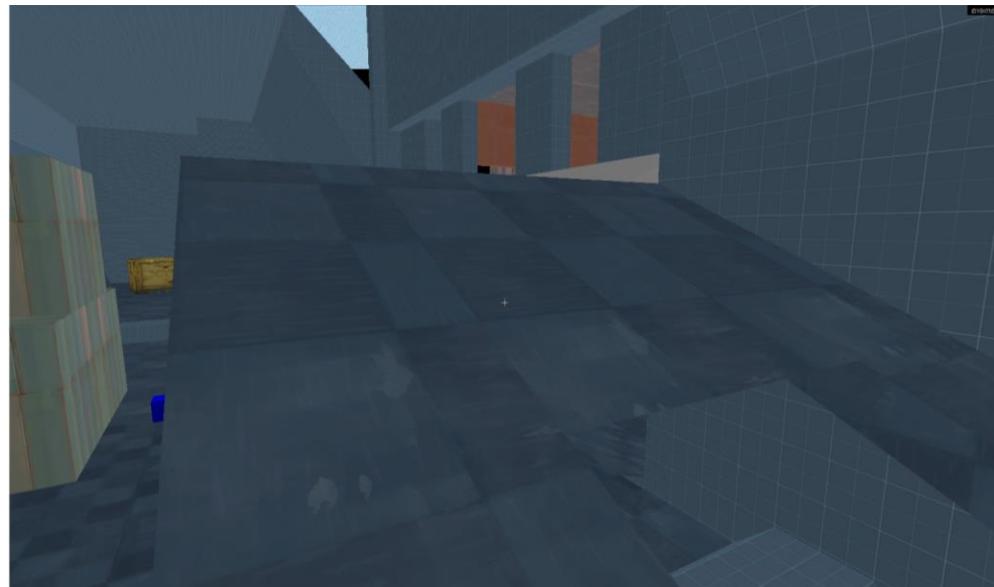


Figure 26, Introduced Wedge on ramps

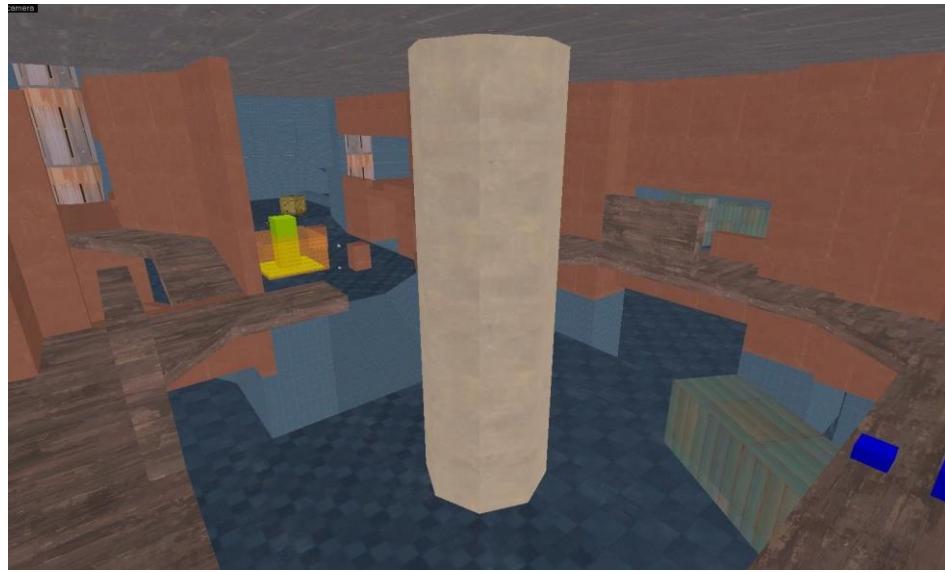


Figure 27, Implemented Pillar

After reviewing the catwalk area and considering the feedback received, I was pleased with the results and the gameplay experience it offered. However, I aimed to further improve the gameplay dynamics within this area. To achieve this, I decided to introduce additional catwalk sections by integrating them into the central pillar.

This adjustment not only provided more cover for players on the lower level, offering additional hiding spots but also increased the map's verticality. Players now have more choice of play in Undocking.



Figure 28, Pillar with Added Connection



Figure 29, Enhanced Protection

Continuing with the focus on enhancing cover, I decided to augment the map by introducing additional elements to fill in previously empty spaces. From feedback I found the partition between sections wasn't enough. Specifically, in the Conveyors area, I incorporated boxes and walls into the entryway. This modification was made with the intention of not only providing protection between channels but also ensuring that it didn't impede the flow of gameplay through the Control Point Channel or the High Ground Channel. The added cover now serves as a strategic element, balancing protection and maintaining the desired gameplay dynamics within those key routes.



Figure 30, Enhanced Protection



Figure 31, Entrance Area to Mid Ascent

In response to player feedback, one key improvement was the request for additional flanking routes and entry points into the map. To address this, I explored the underutilized buffer space located just beyond the canals and implemented a ramp leading to higher ground. This adjustment served two important purposes.

Firstly, it provided snipers and engineers with an alternative method of accessing the "nest spots" on the map, making it more accessible for these players. Secondly, this new passageway enabled flanking from a different angle, expanding the options for players beyond the previous single-entry point at the column. This change encourages greater mobility within the map and helps connect multiple areas. This help make Portside more engaging and interesting.

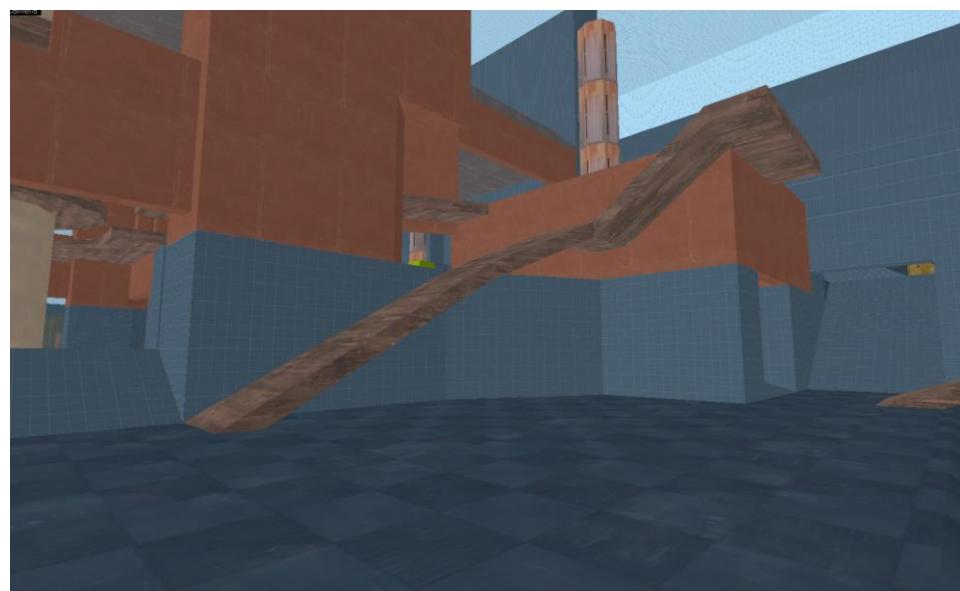


Figure 32, Implemented Ramp

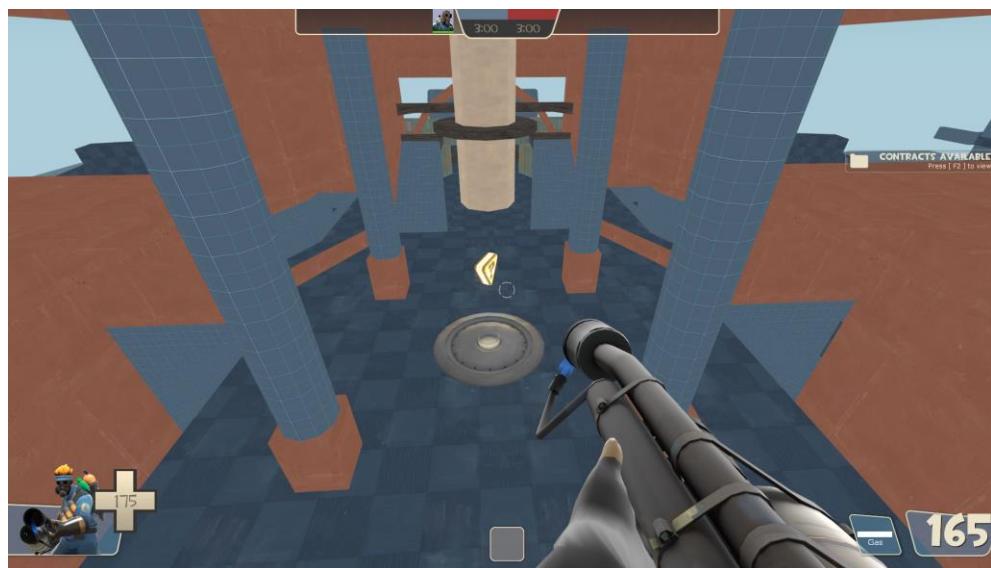


Figure 33, Developed Mid Converge Cover

Following points of feedback with the lack of cover in open areas, I focused on improving the protection at the critical point. To achieve this, I introduced a series of pillars and columns strategically placed throughout the connectors, fortifying the map's defences. This not only provides essential cover for Pyro players as they approach the point but also disrupts the line of sight for turrets on the map.

These additions force turrets to retarget or potentially miss their rockets due to the new cover, enabling a broader range of characters to play to their unique strengths within the map. This helps improve the playability for the closer range characters.



Figure 34, More Protection

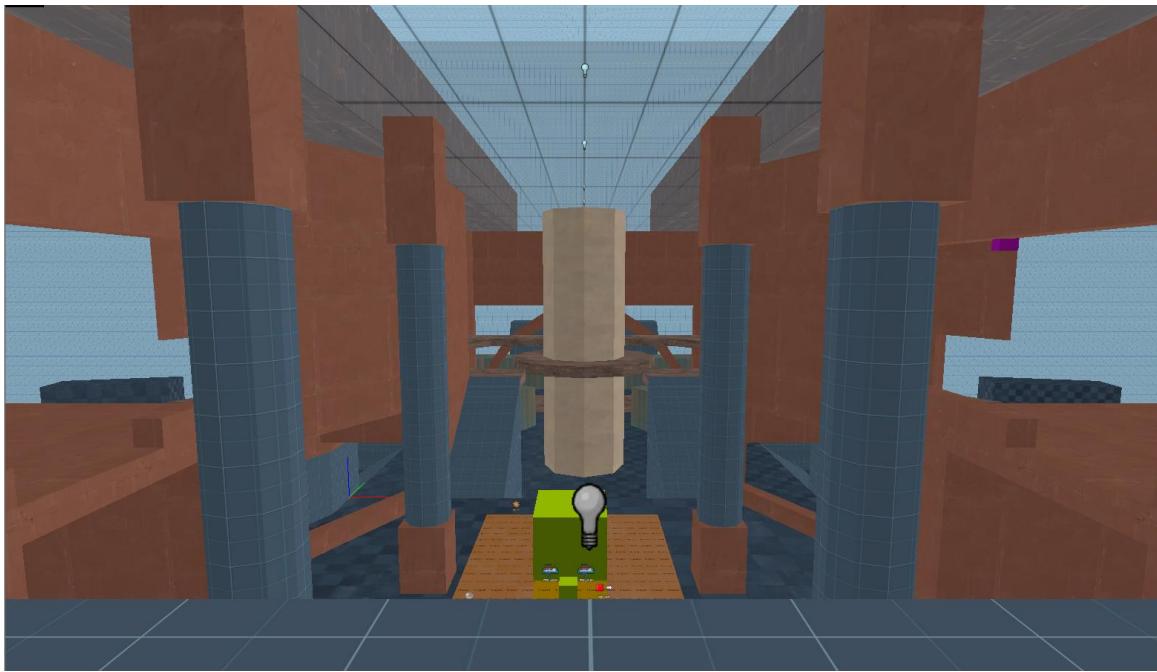


Figure 34, View of Control Point from Sniper Nest

In the core central section, my focus was on improving the central connector of the map. The primary issue we identified, following some feedback, was the excessive power wielded by snipers on the map. As depicted in the 'before' image, players had an unobstructed sightline stretching from one end of the map to the other. This made it overpowered and hard to counter with the closer range characters.

To address this problem, I introduced a wall at the top of the ramps to limit the sniper's visibility, preventing them from seeing too far beyond the ramps. This adjustment ensures that each section of the map feels distinct and segmented, while still allowing the Sniper to engage characters positioned at the tops of the stairs. Furthermore, the addition of this wall contributes to the overall shape design of the control point, creating a more secure and balanced play environment, forming a trapezium-shape.



Figure 35, Control Point with Added Line of Site Breaker

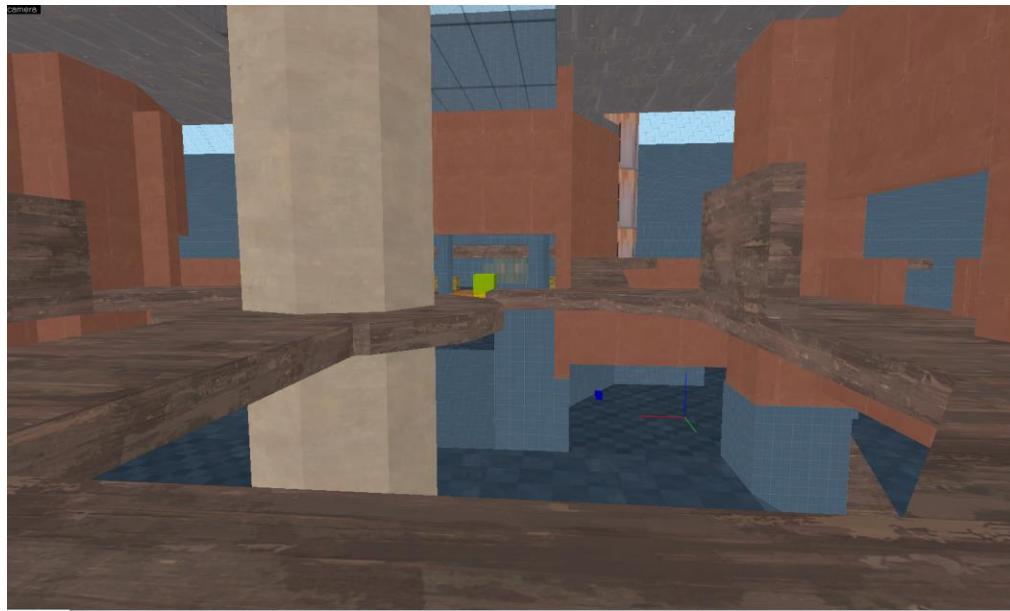


Figure 36, Images Showing the Dividing wall in place from the other side.

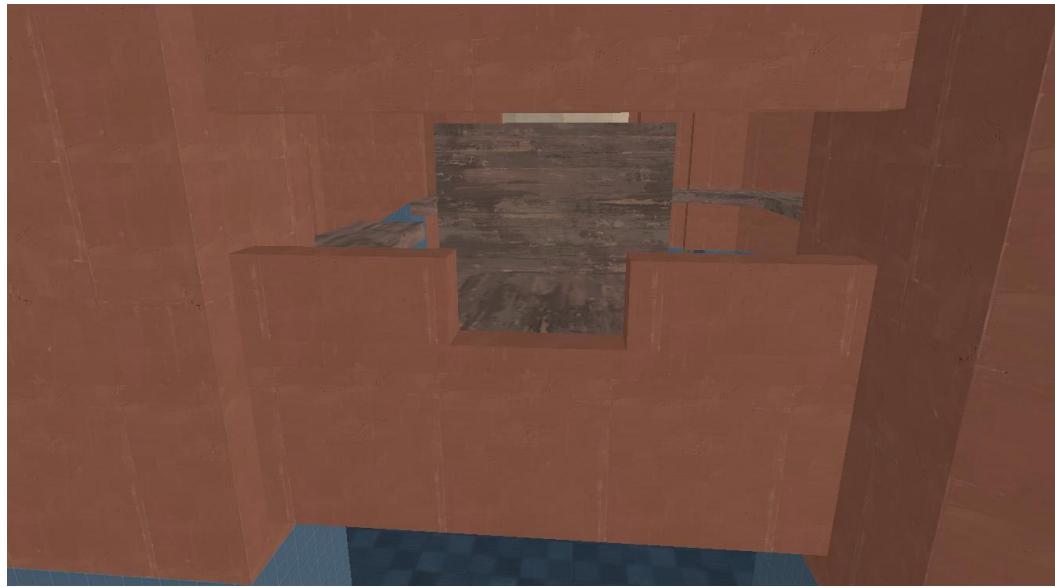


Figure 37, Window Position

Returning to the turret spot in the lower section of the map, I explored a minor design alteration for the barricade. Building on the insights from an Affordance lecture, I opted for a subtle adjustment by giving the barricade a more pointed shape. The intention behind this change was to bring attention to this position and tell an attack this is where a threat could come from. This helped to improve map clarity on the map.



Figure 38, Enhanced Window Visual

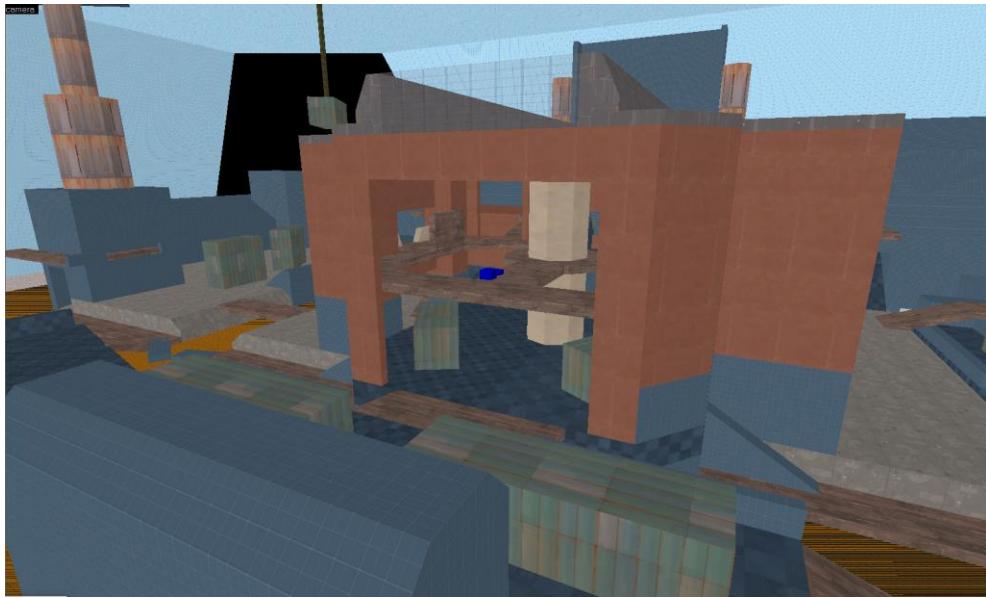


Figure 39, Undocking Gate

After going through a few more iterations, I decided to open the undocking main gate. This choice was primarily influenced by the aesthetics and the overall theme of the map I was aiming for. Given that this is a bustling port responsible for handling cargo, a more spacious area seemed fitting to accommodate the loading and unloading of goods.

In addition to the visual appeal, I also wanted to provide soldiers and demo men with more options for manoeuvring across the map, utilizing boosts effectively. This change is not only for cosmetic reasons but also aimed at enhancing the map's design and gameplay.



Figure 40, Critical Point of Sight

I also examined another tweak, addressing a problematic spawn-killing spot. Previously, players had the ability to see all the way through to a spawn door, potentially catching players as they exited. To resolve this, I extended the cargo containers to provide cover and address this issue on the map. This helped prevent any spawn camping.

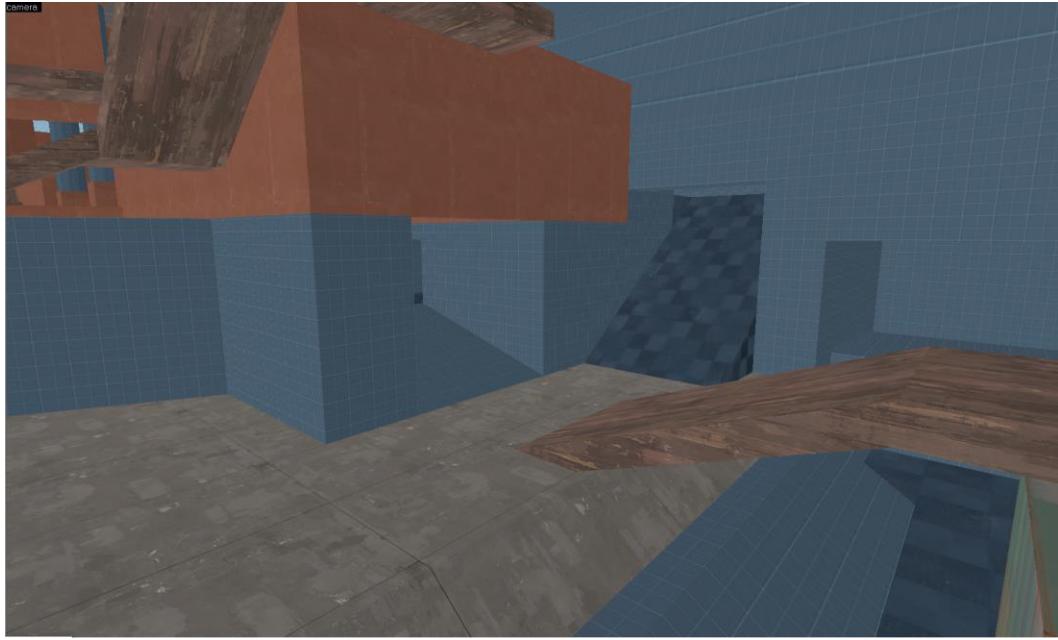


Figure 41, Flank Routes

In response to player feedback, I received requests for additional flanking opportunities within the map. Previously, when dealing with the high ground, the only access points were through the spawn path or via the control point. This restricted approach options, making the gameplay less enjoyable for many as they felt locked into a lane of play.

Introducing these changes is aimed at enhancing the map's flow and encouraging more flanking possibilities. It's expected to provide a more dynamic and satisfying gameplay experience. This made the map more viable for Spy's and Scouts.

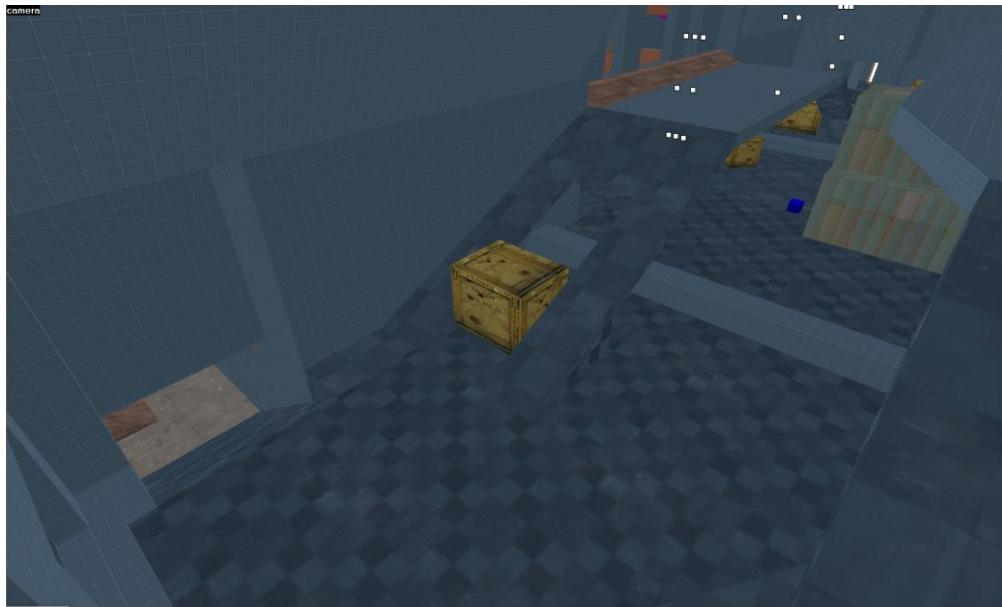


Figure 42, Undocking View of Flank

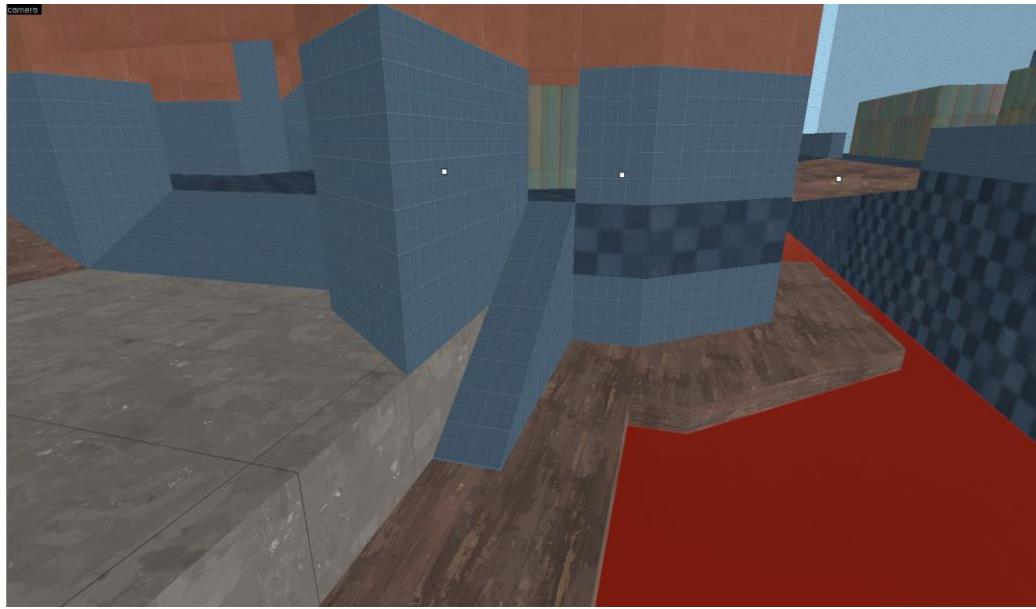


Figure 43, Wooden Flank Ramp

Another adjustment I implemented was widening the gap in the wall. While it may not be critically necessary or have a significant impact, it does contribute to making it more noticeable as an option for players. Additionally, the increased width makes it easier for heavy players to navigate through the space, given their larger character model. This improved map clarity and heavy players game experience.

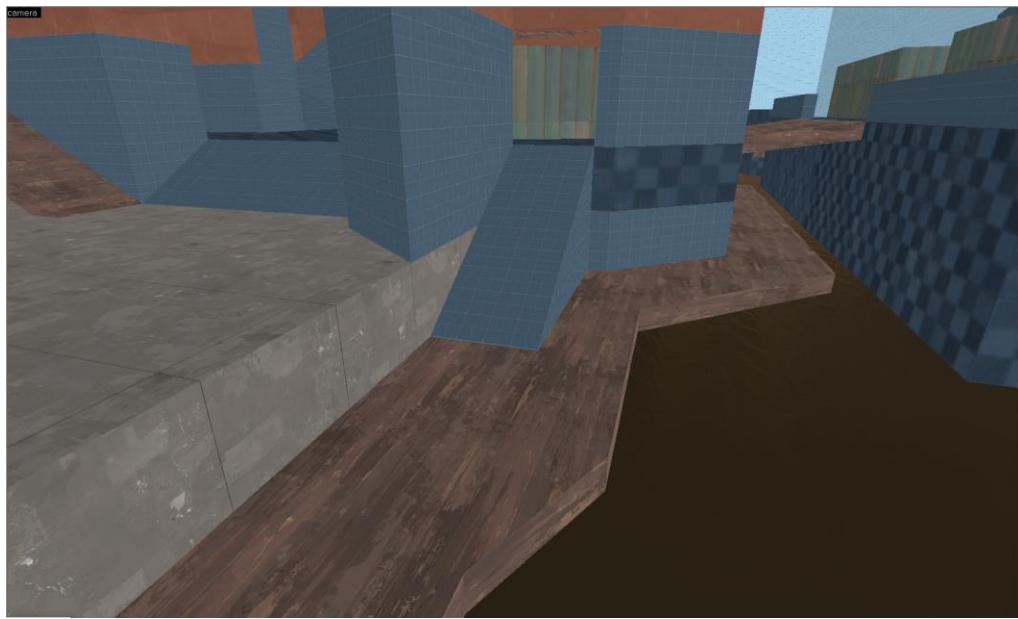


Figure 44, Widened Wooden Flank Ramp

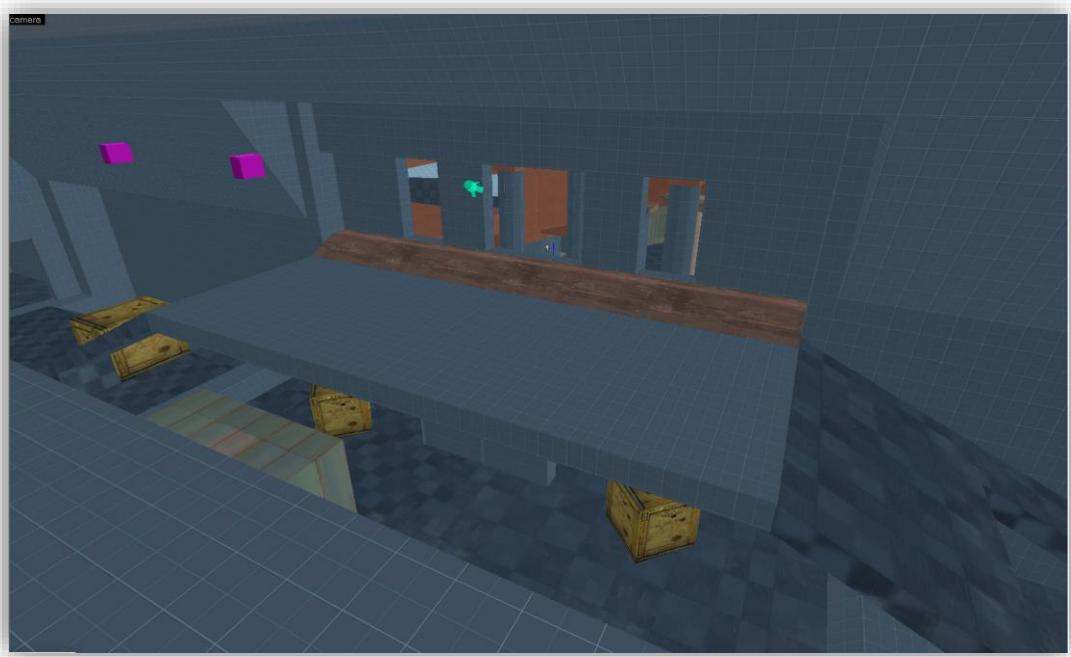


Figure 45, Engineer/Sniper Nest

Continuing with the other iterations, I explored the addition of a backboard to this section. This adjustment is intended to assist Soldier players and Demomen in aiming their shots more effectively in this area. It also offers some protection from attacks coming from behind. Previously, Soldiers and Demomen had nothing to hit except the player, this change improves the experience for both sides attack or defence.

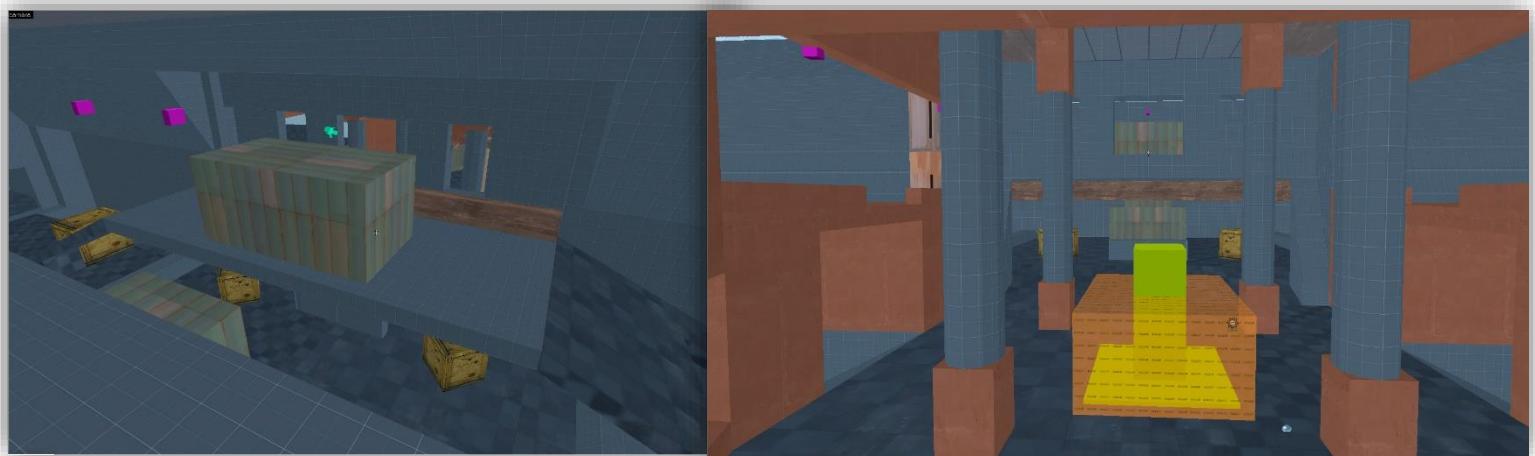


Figure 46, Nest with new implemented boxes



Figure 47, Implementation of Signage

In line with the insights gained during our Affordance lecture, I focused on improving the map's clarity for players. To achieve this, I added overlay arrows on the map, guiding players toward the point. While I appreciate this change, I've noticed that it gives the map a somewhat convoluted appearance, resembling a game of Twister. I Reduced the number presented to points only where needed to keep clarity.

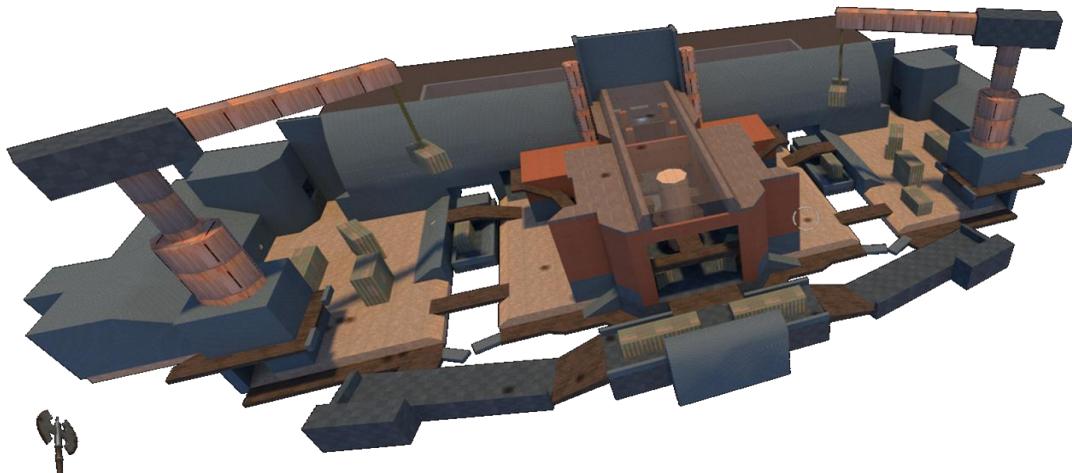


Figure 48, Map Iteration Look



Figure 49, Removal Of Boat Channel Of Play

In response to the recent changes and feedback, it became apparent that players weren't utilizing the boat sections. The issue stemmed from their disconnection from the main map and their considerable distance from the control point. This lack of incentive to undertake such a long trek around, unintentionally, turned it into a "4th channel" on the map, deviating from the typical map design principles seen in multiplayer games.

Considering this feedback, I made the decision to remove the boat sections and transform them into a sniper nest, so to speak. Although it may be challenging for characters to reach, it offers a highly rewarding vantage point. This position now overlooks the spawn point areas, making it a high-risk, high-reward spot for players. This adjustment also now aligns the map with the conventional 3-lane design found in many maps. While I removed the boats, I've retained the



wooden walkway, as it remains a crucial component by providing a viable flanking route for players.

Figure 50, Map Development Render



Figure 51, Too Open Areas

In response to the feedback received, I am considering the addition of more boxes and crates in this area to enhance player protection. Many players mentioned that the open spaces in this region were overly exposed, making it challenging to advance toward the central site when the central base was under defence. To address this issue, I am planning to introduce additional cover elements in these areas to improve the gameplay experience.



Figure 52, Power of High Ground



Figure 53, Boxes and Protection

For this adjustment, I looked at incorporating more elements of cover from when a player leaves the buffer zone. Protection came in the forms of boxes and the bridge getting protection from the top and the bottom. This improved the safety of leaving the buffer zone.



Figure 54, Bridge and box Protection



Figure 55, Design of Canal

Following more feedback another thing I looked at doing was extending the boat section. This came down to people thinking there was safety after the drop and then falling into the water. This got frustrating for players, extending this section improved the maps flow as accidental deaths dropped.



Figure 56, Extended Boat Barge

Following on from people wanting more buffer zone protection I added in a cargo container with open doors for the bridge section. This helps prevent people using this safer path of play from being killed as often, this also helps to balance out the sniper nest and it being too strong.



Figure 57, Further Buffer Zone protection

The Next thing I looked at doing was making the high ground less overpowered. For this I looked at taking away some of the protection on the high ground to prevent more peek-and-shoot gameplay in this tower. I will need to do some more testing on this to see if more drastic change is needed.



Figure 58, Making Engineer Nest More Balanced



Figure 59, Affordance Improvements

For the Clearer Indication that water killed, I looked at adding in some mesh signs that clearly warn players about going in the water. Players will see this sign as they exit the spawns and are near any water. Seeing this message once should be enough to enforce the idea of danger. Stepping in the water from this point is at the player's discretion, this should help to improve map design and see fewer environmental deaths. Following on from this I added in more overlays with numbers. This was to promote communication with players by allowing them to state a definitive location via a gate number, this helps promote teamwork and communication.



Figure 60, Affordance Improvement



Figure 61, New Control Point Position

Following from recent game testing feedback, players were found to still not be using the Undocking Channel play much compared to the other channels of play. To Improve this, I looked at slightly moving the position of the control point in a position more between Mid Converge and undocking, this helped to Keep gameplay engaging on all fronts while not drastically changing map flow. The Position of the control point also helped to see new styles of gameplay occur beyond just running up mid ascent and fighting. This also helped improve to see more play occur between different levels of height.



Figure 62, Glass Divider

Following on from the control point position adjustment I looked at developing the Undocking zone. With the central pillar adjusted some sort of divider was needed to get put in its place. While a wall was initially tried it ruined the flow as players were uncertain about what was beyond the wall and thus didn't risk it by going beyond. For this I changed the mesh to glass, this helped block both sides from long range fire while not hindering close quarters play, players are more encouraged to attack something they can see. The Final Quality of life addition I did was adding more pathing options for the Undocking High Ground ramp, this helped make going up more approachable for attacking players. This also helped with Scout/ Spy Flank routes.



Figure 63, Enhanced Connections



Figure 63, Player Guidance Improvement

Following on from some final feedback points stated in Player Testing a bit More Guidance on the map was asked for. For this I looked at doing three things. The first thing I looked at doing was improving the player spawns visuals, this helped tell players where ammo /health was and where exits were, additionally taking a cut out of the room walls to help show the player the third potential exit, The next point of guidance I did was adding overlays everywhere on the map to tell where ammo and health can spawn, this is good as there was no indication where it can spawn once picked up. The final point of affordance I covered was adding the sides colors in the core warehouse. This helped with improving the players' understanding of the map.



Figure 64, Further Player Guidance