

2025

FLAT FRENZY

GAME DESIGN DOCUMENT

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Overview

X-Statement

Overcooked, but instead of cooking, you're completing everyday tasks in a shared student flat.

High Level Concept

This is a 2–4 player couch co-op game set in a towering student housing complex, where each round represents one hectic day in a shared flat. Players juggle personal tasks and shared chores, both of which appear dynamically and come with their own ticking timers. Limited appliances and tight spaces result in accidental blocking, collisions, and emergent chaos.

Failing to complete chores builds up the flat's shared "chaos meter", whereas failing to complete personal tasks leads to individual penalties. At the end of each in-game week, the Student Housing Board (SHB) evaluates the flat: stay below a certain chaos threshold to move up to a better flat; exceed it and get bumped down.

Over time, the players work their way up the building, towards the infamous penthouse suite – navigating increasing complexity and new challenges. The game centers on coordination under pressure, light social friction, and the comedy of shared student living.



Moving Out (2020)



PlateUp! (2022)

Genre

- Couch co-op party game
- Light simulation with time / crisis management

Visuals & Viewpoint

- Top-down, "2.5D" perspective (*Overcooked*, *Catastronauts*)
- Cozy, low-poly, flat-shaded aesthetic (*Animal Crossing*, *Moving Out*) with bright, soft colors and exaggerated/squishy animations
- Tight, cluttered apartment layouts

Target Audience

- Fans of chaotic co-op games like *Overcooked*, *Catastronauts*, or *Moving Out*
- Casual gamers & friends groups looking for a funny, lighthearted online experience

Platforms

- Nintendo Switch
- Potential for port to other consoles

Gameplay & Systems

Core Mechanics

Actions:

- **Move:** Quick, snappy movement similar to *Overcooked*
- **Grab/Drop:** Press a button (like Space) to pick something up and carry it, press same button to drop at another location
- **Interact:** Press a different button (like F) to interact with an item or appliance, complete an action (progress bar)

Tasks:

- Tasks spawn dynamically throughout the day, slightly faster than they can be completed, but with frequency slowing down towards the end of the day
- Each task has a ticking timer, represented by a circle filling up
- Tasks are asymmetrical in that some require a single interaction (with progress bar), whereas others require multiple steps, including carrying items from A to B
- Tasks are split into **personal tasks** (indicated by a colored marker) and **shared chores** (represented by a grey marker)
 - Personal tasks are tied to a specific player, and completing/missing them results in small rewards/penalties for that player, like modifiers to movement & task speed
 - Shared chores can be completed by anyone and doing so reduces the chaos meter, whereas missing them results in the task multiplying (like trash piling up), or turning into a bigger task that takes longer to complete

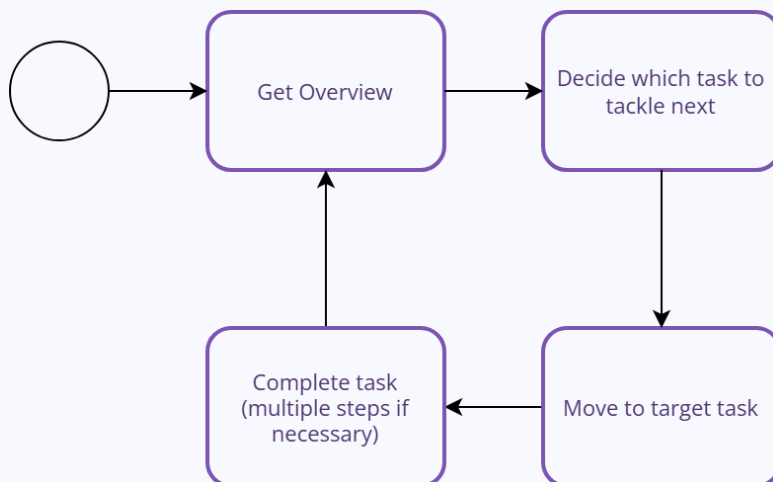
Chaos Meter:

- Always visible in HUD, acts as the main ticking clock for players to race against
- Simple status bar filling up, equivalent to how many shared chores are currently open
- Shows both current chaos level & chaos threshold to stay under by the end of the week

Progression:

- After seven rounds/days, the chaos level and threshold are evaluated, determining whether players will move to a higher or lower level in the student housing tower
- Lower levels:
 - Smaller layouts
 - Trashier, more run-down look
 - Starts with more mess/shared chores/higher value on the chaos meter, but also have a higher threshold for evaluation
 - Special events/interruptions in the form of broken appliances, blackouts, etc.
- Upper levels:
 - Bigger layouts
 - More luxurious look
 - Starts with less mess, but also lower chaos threshold
 - More complex appliances & tasks: Focus shifts from managing many small issues to completing tasks neatly and creating as little mess as possible in the first place
 - Special events/interruptions in the form of disturbed neighbors, cleaning robots going rogue, etc.

Core Loop



Tasks

Tasks (personal & chores) follow a basic framework and can be added in modular fashion. A complete list of these tasks will be created as a separate spreadsheet for production.

Basic Framework:

- Each task can have one or more steps
- Steps can either be carrying an item from A to B, or interacting with an item (progress bar)
- Items may be obtained from, brought to, or interact with appliances in order to complete a step
- Some steps may spawn new chores & contribute to the chaos meter
- Personal tasks have to describe the modifier rewards/penalties for completing/not completing
- Shared chores have to describe the follow-up chores for not completing

Examples:

- Personal tasks
 - **Laundry:** Carry dirty clothes from room to washing machine → start wash & wait for progress bar → carry dry clothes from machine back to room
 - **Cook food:** Pick up ingredients from fridge → place on stove & wait for progress bar → pick up as finished meal & carry to table → eat & wait for progress bar → creates dishes chore
 - **Shower:** Use shower & wait for progress bar → creates puddle chore
 - **Study:** Sit at desk & wait for progress bar
 - ...
- Shared chores
 - **Clean dishes:** Interact with sink & wait for progress bar
 - **Take out trash:** Carry trash bag to the door & wait for progress bar
 - ...

Characters

Characters are player avatars with distinct color/visuals, personalities & unique personal tasks. Before starting a campaign, players each choose a character. As with tasks, a complete list of characters shall be created as a separate spreadsheet for production.

Basic Framework:

- Each character has a distinct color, personality, visual identity & flavor text
- Characters have a consistent pool of possible personal tasks, reflecting their lifestyle

Examples:

- **Fitness Freak:** Workout routine with loud music, drinking protein shake, etc.
- **Sleep Enthusiast:** Take a nap, play video games, etc.
- **Dog owner:** Feed dog, take on walks, etc.
- ...

Level Design & Generation

Flat layouts persist for 7 rounds, until players are assigned a new flat. All flat layouts are randomly generated & populated with appliances, according to specific rules & restrictions.

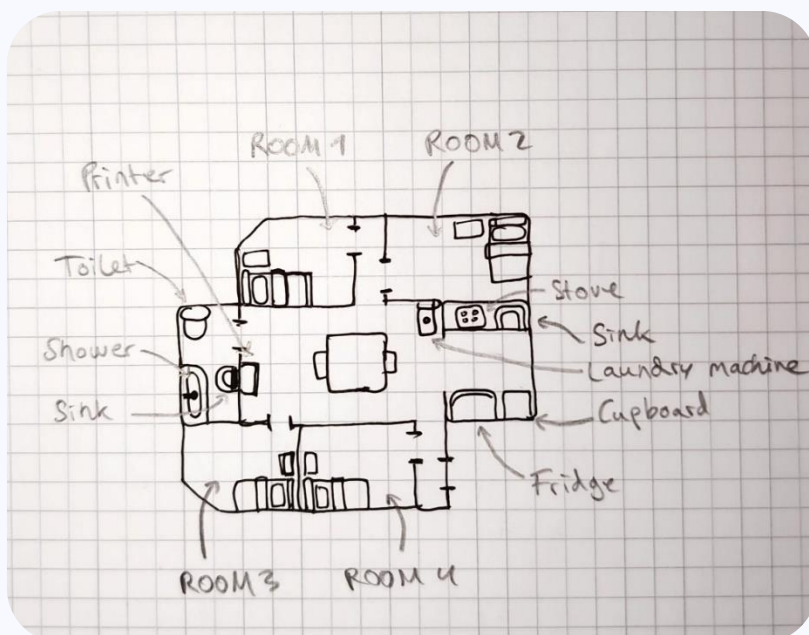
In general, levels are small, irregularly shaped shared flats that emphasize:

- Tight navigation spaces (narrow halls, tight kitchens/bathrooms)
- Shared choke points where task conflict naturally emerges
- Room asymmetry to keep player movement varied and encourage bump-ins
- Non-grid-based design with angular, exaggerated room shapes

Each flat must support:

- 2–4 uniquely colored player rooms
- Key shared zones & appliances:
 - Kitchen: Fridge, stove, sink, cupboard, trash, (table, laundry machine)
 - Bathroom: Toilet, shower, sink
 - Hallway/lounge: (Table, laundry machine)

Example layout sketch:



UI Design

Key UI elements include:

- **Markers** above appliances/items:
 - In player color for personal task, grey for shared chore
 - Shows time remaining as circle filling up
 - Visible to everyone; If appliance has multiple, colored markers above it, you know there might be conflict ahead
 - When carrying an item, all markers should become transparent, highlighting only the target location
- **Chaos Meter HUD:**
 - Persistent, top of screen
 - Shows threshold and current level
- **Player Feedback:**
 - Penalty popups at end of day
 - Weekly SHB report card for chaos meter evaluation

Story

Narrative Premise

You and your friends have just moved into a towering student housing complex, run by the infamously opaque Student Housing Board (SHB). Every week, the SHB evaluates each flat based on its “chaos level”. Those who manage to keep it together move up toward the elusive top floors (with rumors of private balconies and functional dishwashers). Those who fail sink deeper into the cluttered depths of communal despair.

Initially just trying to survive & not get sent to the dreaded basement levels, you soon learn of the mysterious upper levels and set on a quest to get the infamous top penthouse. The only way forward is up – floor by floor, day by day, task by task.

Campaign Structure

A single campaign has a relatively short playtime. It starts quickly by selecting characters & going through a short intro/moving-in sequence. Afterwards, it unfolds floor by floor, with each week of in-game time covering a short series of hectic days in a single flat. As you rise, instead of a story with cutscenes and dialogue trees, you get bits and pieces of narrative through environmental storytelling and quirky in-world communications.

Examples:

- SHB memos posted in the flat or delivered via intercom, getting increasingly absurd or ominous
- Room decor and artifacts left by previous tenants (e.g. mysterious to-do lists, warning notes, conspiracy boards)

- Recurring characters or references across floors (e.g. a failed chemistry student haunting the lower levels, or an SHB inspector who's always one floor behind you)

Replayability

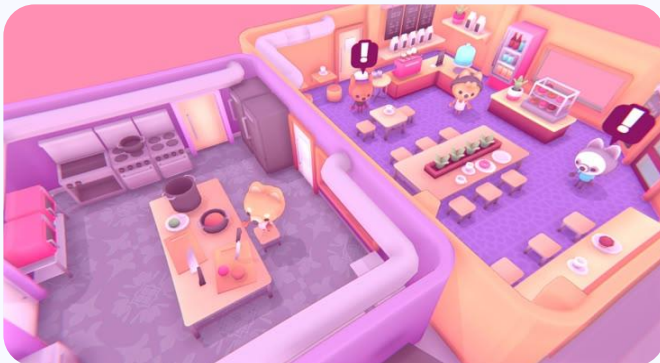
The light narrative approach rewards observation and replay with a slow accumulation of lore — building up a vague but memorable mythology of the tower and the people trapped trying to rise through it:

- Different routes expose different narrative fragments, background characters, or SHB subplots
- There may be environmental modifiers like floors run by art collectives, sport fanatics, or sleep-study experiments
- Further campaigns may provide different goals, as an alternative to getting the top penthouse, implemented like an “achievements” system

Art & Audio

Visual Style & References

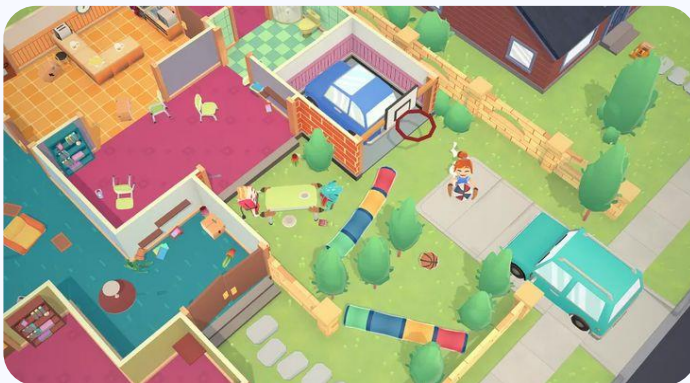
General Aesthetic:



[@cronobreak](#) – Mock for an Animal Café Game



[@bitm00](#) – Child's Room



Moving Out (2020)



Going Under (2020)

Perspective & Level Layouts:



PlateUp! (2022)



Catastronauts (2018)

Audio Style & Mood

The audio design reinforces the game's offbeat, chaotic tone with semi-realistic sounds exaggerated for comedic and emotional effects. Background soundscapes capture the buzz of the city, distant plumbing rumbles, and the muffled bass of someone else's party two floors up.

Each interaction is punctuated with satisfying, slightly exaggerated foley (clattering dishes, slamming washing machines, groaning pipes) to support both clarity and humor.

The music is jazzy, organic, a bit quirky — subtly shifting intensity based on in-game pressure. During peak chaos, it ramps up in tempo or stumbles slightly to mirror the mess.

Character actions, collisions, and key events are supported by playful, personality-rich sound cues. The goal is a soundscape that feels messy & lived-in but simultaneously satisfying & responsive.

Technology & Production

Platform

- Nintendo Switch as main targeted platform
- Potential for future port to other consoles (PlayStation, Xbox)
- Visual style and technical scope are kept intentionally lightweight

Multiplayer Considerations

- 2–4 player local co-op multiplayer with shared screen
- Potential for future implementation of online multiplayer with matchmaking or private lobbies (but outside of current scope)

Development Scope

Team Size: ~4-6 people

- 1-2 Game Designers
- 1-2 Programmers
- 1 3D artist (freelance/contract)
- 1 Sound Designer (freelance/contract)

Milestones:

- Prototype (3 months): Core loop, test maps
- Vertical Slice (6 months): Full week cycle, 3 flats, 4 characters
- Alpha (10 months): All systems implemented, content placeholders
- Beta (14 months): Content complete, polish
- Release (16-18 months): Final playtesting, marketing, distribution

Estimated Budget: ~€200,000-295,000

- Core Salaries
 - 1-2 Designers: €60-80K
 - 1-2 Programmers: €70-100K
 - = ~€130~180K
- Freelancers/Contract Work
 - 3D Artist: €20-30K
 - Sound Designer: €7-12K
 - Composer: €5-10K
 - = ~€30-50K
- Marketing & Business
 - Trailer, promo art, website, festivals, etc.: €20-30K
- Tools, Licenses, Misc.
 - Software, asset store, legal, etc.: €10-15K
- Contingency
 - €10-20K

Risks & Challenges

- **Game Design:** Core mechanics & loop need to be validated through prototyping to ensure it's actually fun to play, make adjustments if necessary
- **Balancing:** Asymmetric tasks may lead to fairness or pacing issues that require careful tuning and iteration.

Monetization & Business

Monetization Model

Premium pricing model with extensions/DLCs:

- Base Price: 15-20€ (depending on platform & region)
- No microtransactions, in-game markets, or loot boxes – focus is on simple, complete, polished co-op experience
- Many options for post-launch DLCs (5-10€)
 - New characters
 - New themed campaign variations
 - Cosmetics packs with outfits & flat decorations

Marketing & Distribution Strategy

- Digital distribution via Steam (with wishlist buildup), Epic Store
- Pre-release strategy:
 - Open development updates via Devlogs, Twitter, Discord, and possibly YouTube shorts to document progress and show off emergent gameplay
 - Participation in Steam Next Fest, Indie showcases, and student festivals for playtesting and visibility
- Influencer/press outreach: Focus on creators with co-op, chaotic multiplayer, or student-life content; press kits and early builds provided pre-launch
- Community building: A small, accessible Discord server where fans can submit flat layout ideas, character concepts, or chore suggestions
- Long-tail support: If successful, support the game with occasional themed updates (e.g. exam season chaos, holiday flats), light DLC, and increased platform reach through bundles or seasonal discounts

The overall aim is a sustainable, low-friction model that prioritizes player goodwill and organic word-of-mouth among friend groups and co-op communities.