# Map – Garden of Atarvirta

Overview

Nexuiz – Garden of Atarvirta is an asymmetrical Team Deathmatch/Deathmatch map created in Cryengine editor that shipped with the game Nexuiz, an arena shooter. The objective was to designed a well-balanced asymmetrical map. The reason I chose this game was to get some hands-on experience with the Cryengine editor for level designing. The name is based on a location present in the game.

Workflow

Inspiration
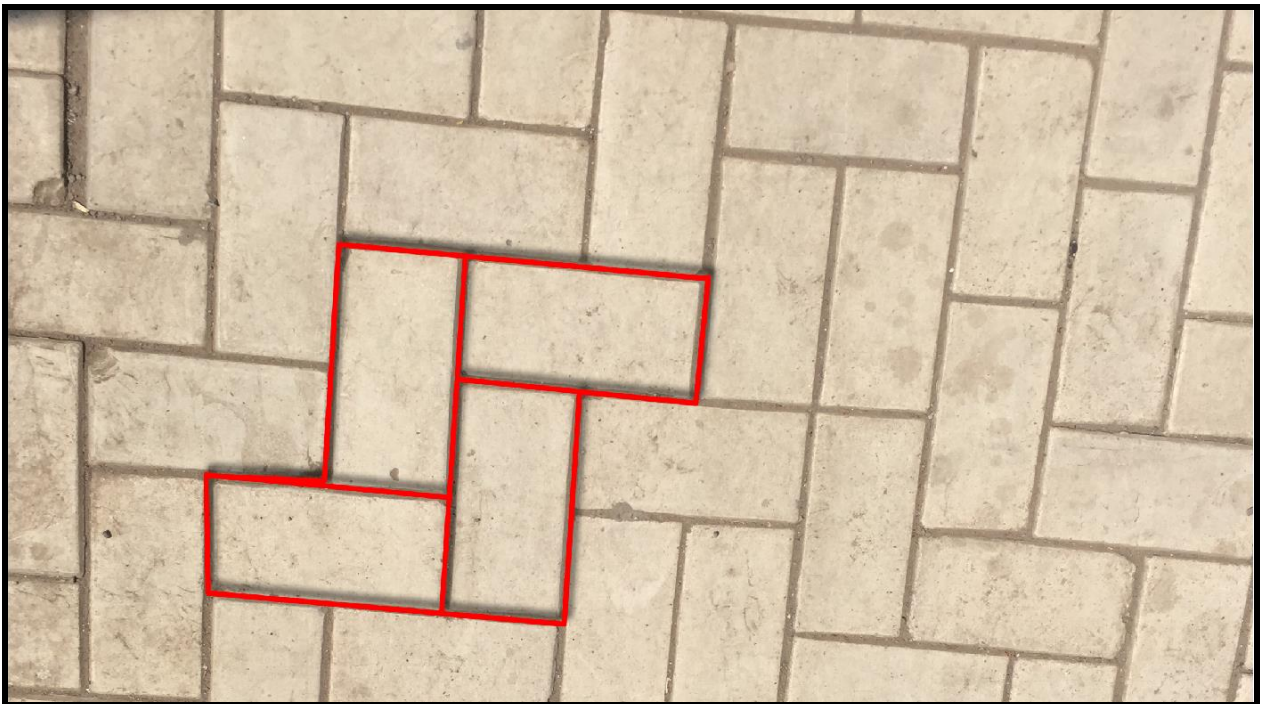
The inspiration for the layout of the map was the pattern of the brick arrangement of a pavement I came across on one of my daily walks. The asymmetrical nature of the arrangement intrigued me and I felt that it could make a unique map layout. I took a quick picture of it and immediately started working on its first draft of the layout.

Paper Design
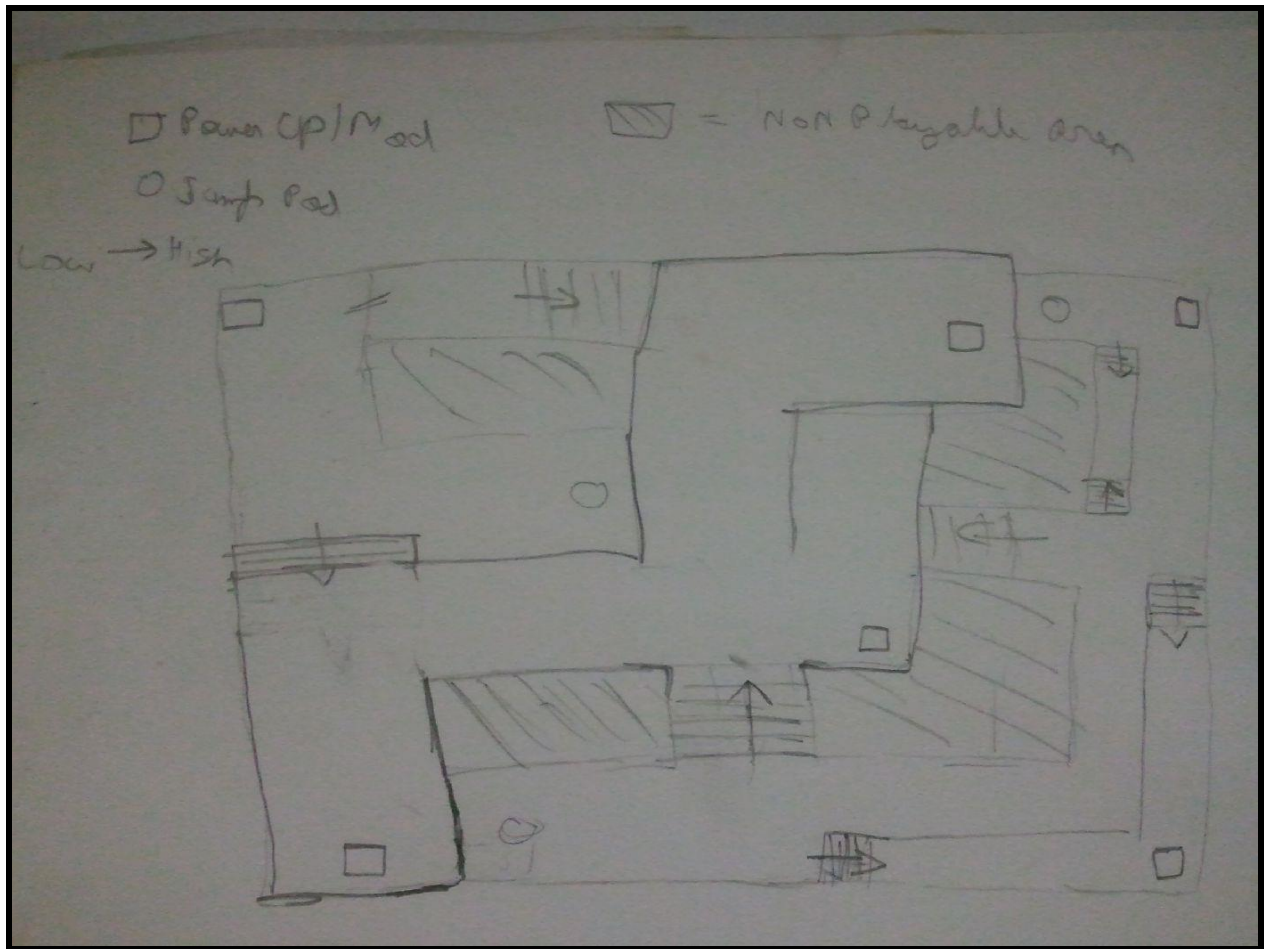
Using the reference image I took, I designed the first draft of the layout on paper and focused on the map flow, combat zones where most skirmishes would occur and ingredient placement.

Iteration 1 – Map Scale
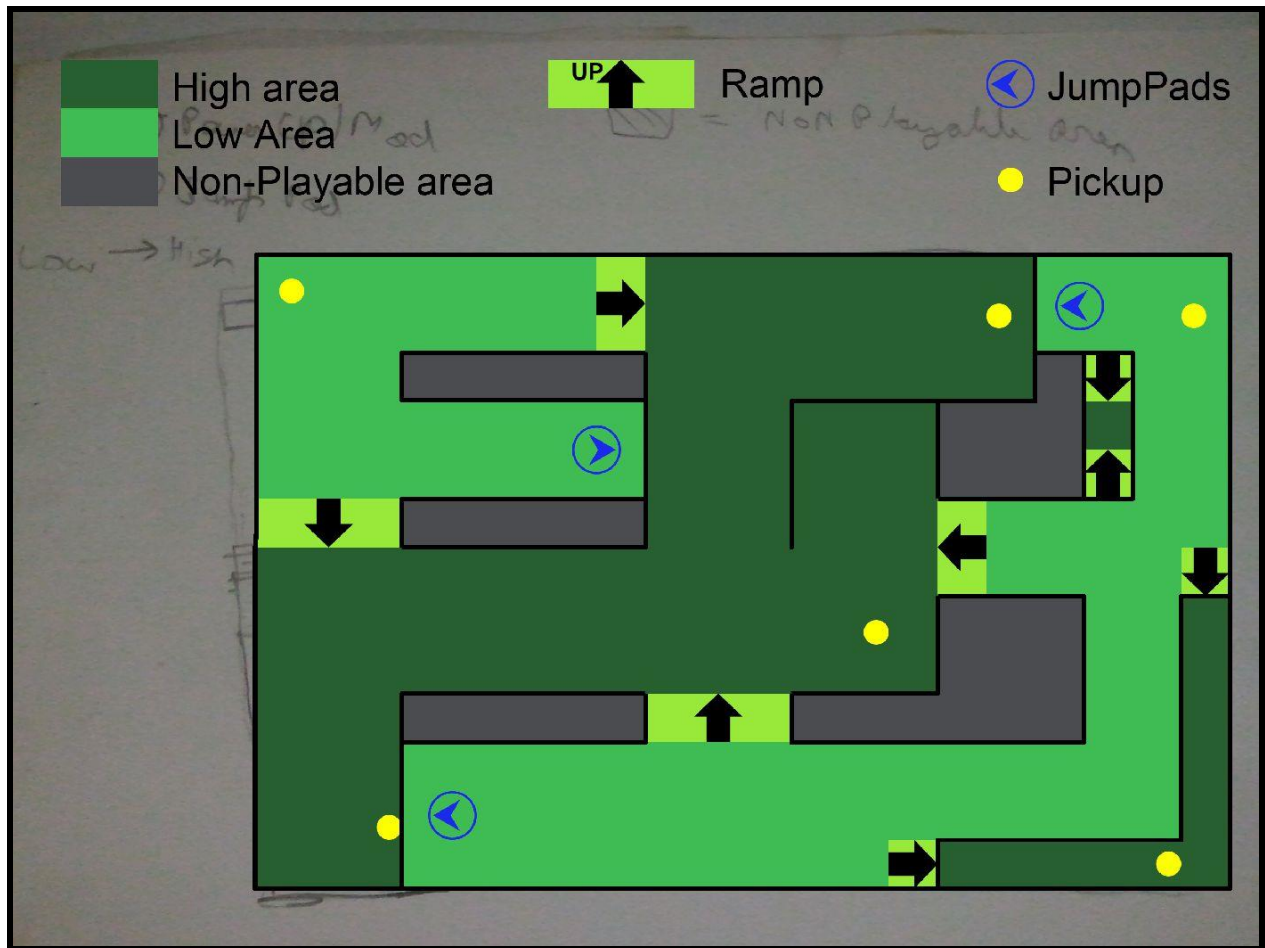
Once I was satisfied with the paper layout, I brought it into Photoshop to get the right map scale. I used the Photoshop grid to validate the layout measurements and tweak accordingly wherever required. Bringing it inside Photoshop allowed me to do quick iterations on the layout.

## Iteration 2 – Layout Tweaking
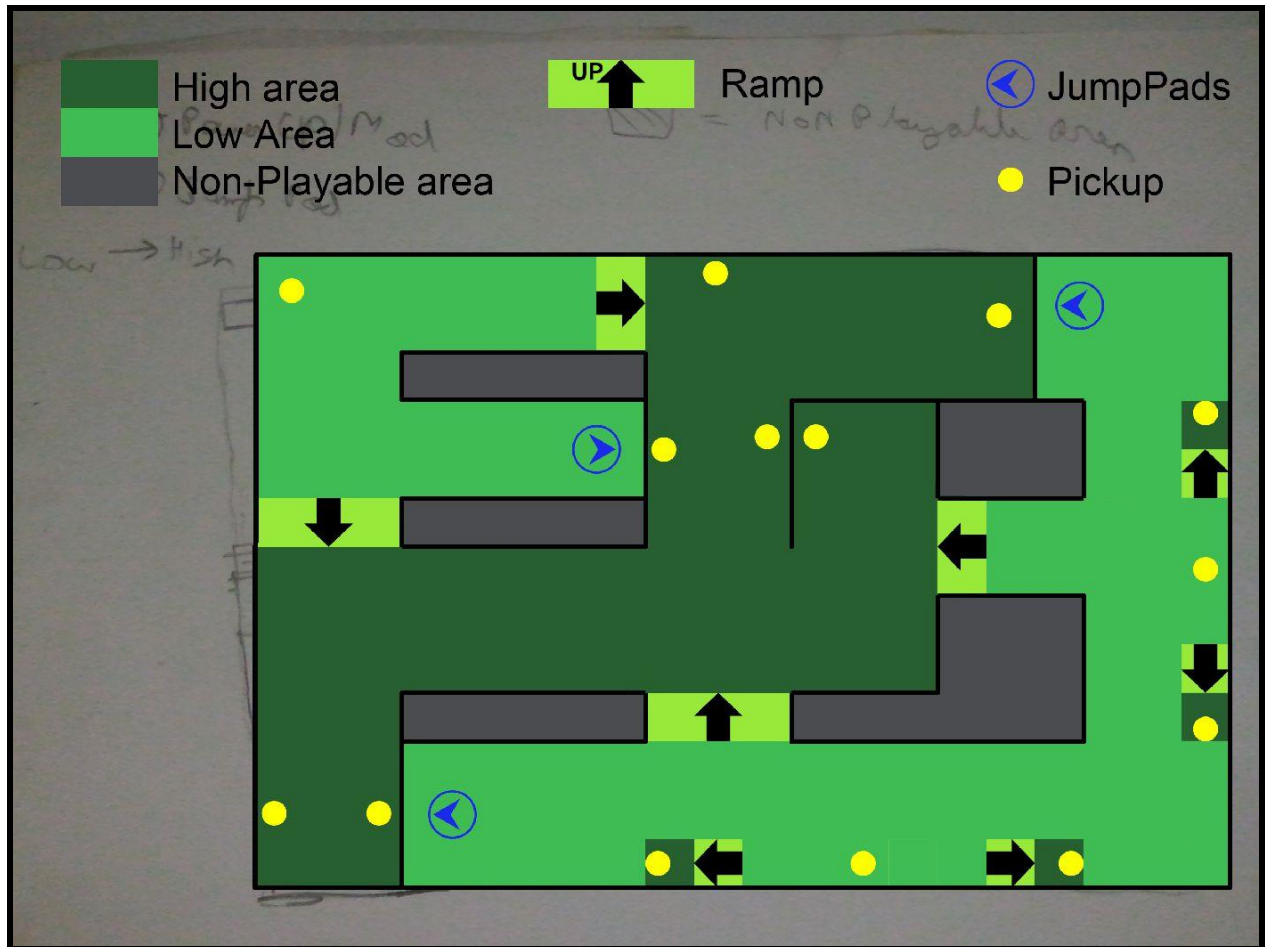
In iteration 1, I realized that the player had less incentive to explore the outer sections of the map, especially the bottom left area. This would have led to very little gameplay happening in more than 50% of the map. To make the map more evenly in terms of gameplay, I changed the layout slightly around the outer area with more valuable power-up pickups distributed.

Grayboxing
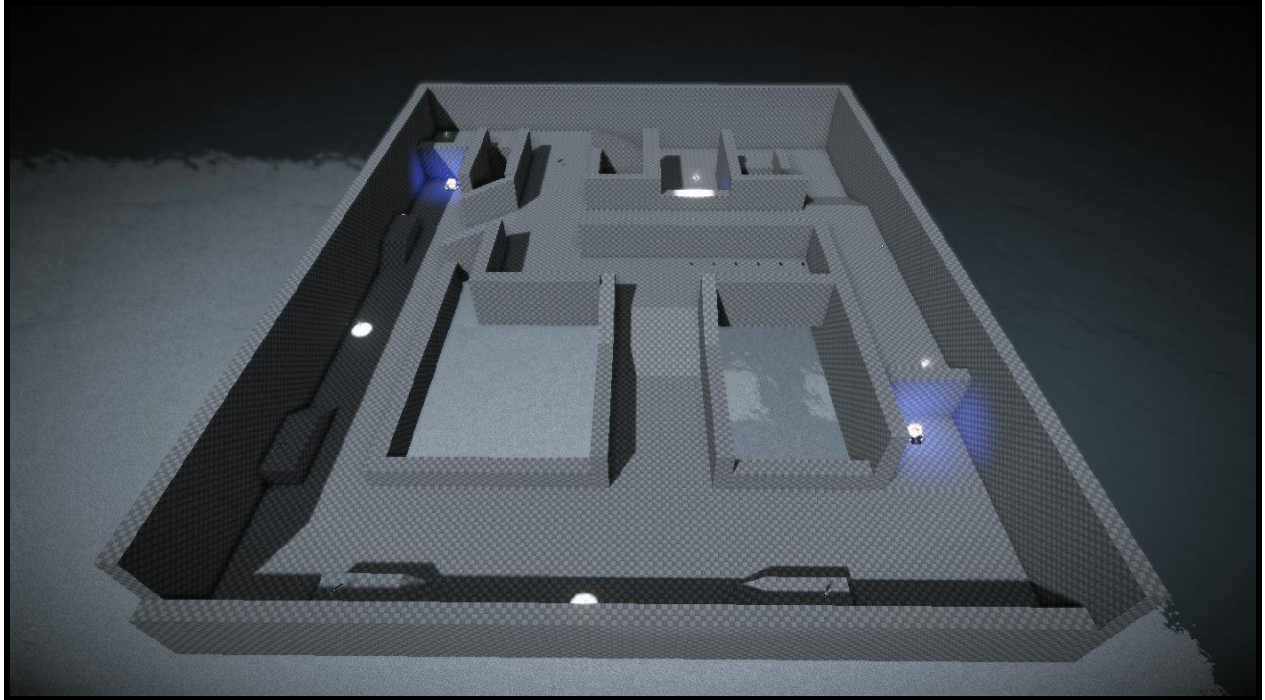
This was the right time to blocking out the layout and prototyping. For this I used the CryEngine editor that came with the game and started the blockout using its built-in level designing tool called Solid tool(CSG). Once the blockout was done, I did a quick test with just the layout to validate the scale of the map and map flow. Since I had played the game before I had a good spatial understanding about the distance and movement speed of the player character. This knowledge was taken into consideration during the layout tweaking stage itself and hence I was able to get the layout right inside the editor with few minor tweaks quickly. The jump-pads were distributed during this phase since they were an integral part of the core navigation gameplay.

Gameplay Ingredients
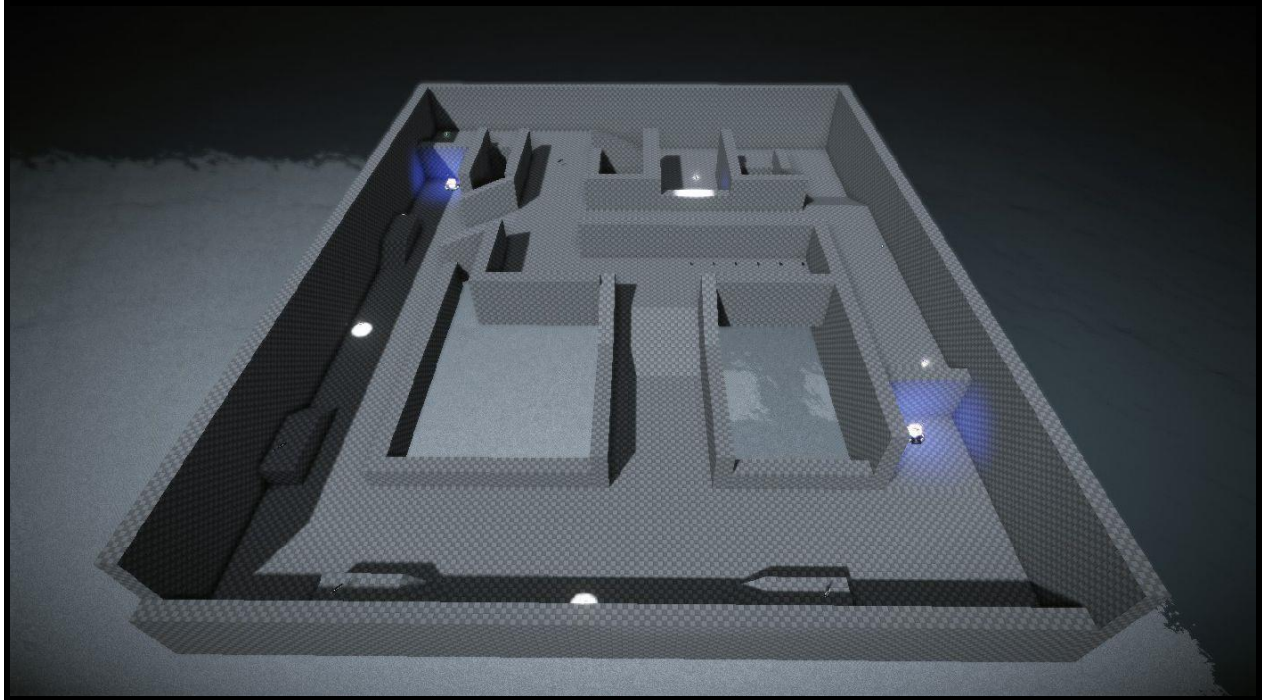
Once I was satisfied with the map flow and scale, I started adding the gameplay ingredients. I added the spawn points, AI waypoints for bot and pickups. I extensively tested the map with bots to make sure all AI waypoints were working correctly.

Environment Art

Once I tested the gameplay, I started adding level art using the modular art pieces that shipped with the game. The challenged I faced was to give unique identity to different areas of the map using the limited modules included in the modular set. I was able to give distinct landmarks to key locations of the map so that players could have good orientation while playing a fast paced game.

LD Lighting

I added LD lighting after the level art pass as further guidance for player orientation. I highlighted the jump-pads and the pickups so they could be spotted from a distance and easily distinguishable from one another so that player can make quick tactical decisions. I also adjusted the skybox lighting such that player can use the sun position and the sunlight as a pivot point to orient themselves.

The level can be downloaded on steam workshop of the game,

https://steamcommunity.com/sharedfiles/filedetails/?id=105714923