Level Design Proposal/Process & Intentions

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Year / Block: 2 / D

Project: Unreal Tournament (Level Design)

Student Role: Designer

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Theme

Visual Theme

Visual Astatic

Subway, Train Station

Mood

Dark, Abandoned, Realistic

Story

Just a normal train station. People would have come here to get on the trains to travel to other cities

This train station would exist in a normal world but I want it to look like it's an important point to hold in a war (because of the transportation)

(Inspired by the Metro, s.t.a.l.k.e.r. and Fallout games)

Gameplay Theme

Combat

Close-quarter combat, I think this style of play is more "fun" as it is fast-paced and makes players use every trick they can to throw off their enemies.

Movement

Quick movements and small arenas, this combined with small corridors and vertical movement will force players to think about dangers from all directions and decide on whether they want to stay in an area or take the chance of encountering another player in a tight space.
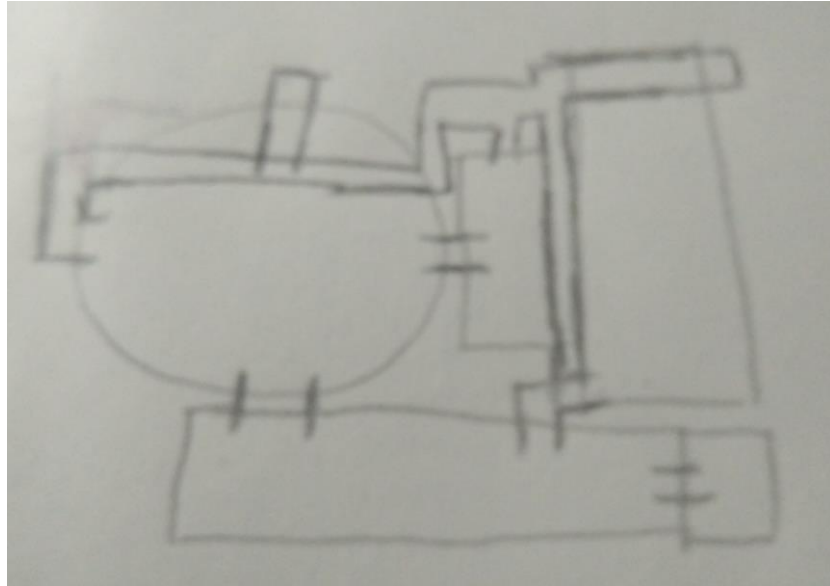
Mechanic

(Team) Deathmatch,

Focused around quick movement in close quarter rooms and tactical gameplay

Focused around cover and traversal between the areas
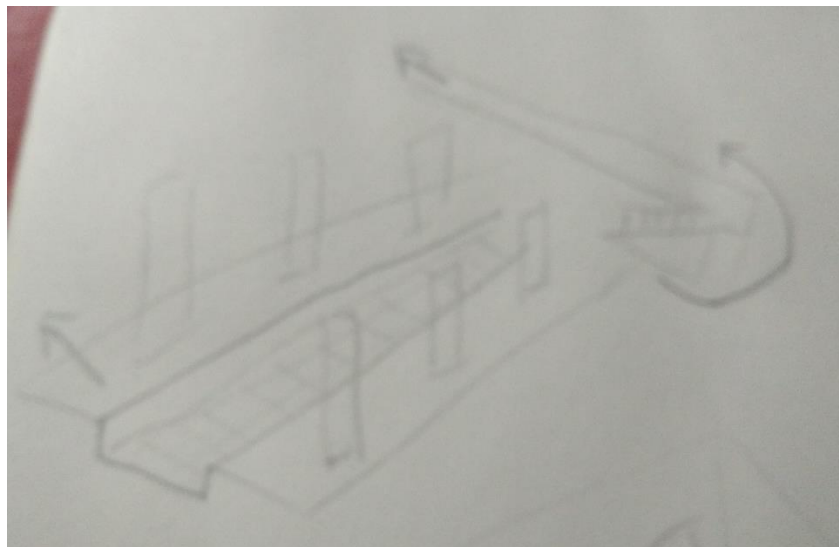
Mood board


a

Level Map

Layout

This is the layout I had in mind, it consists of 3 large areas to fight in and 1 smaller area which leads to all other areas with the main (and also biggest) area being the circle.

Platform

First up is the platform, because this is the most thematic part of the level. The platform is a large open area with tracks separating 2 sides. Pillars are placed on both sides to give cover and can be used to wall jump up to the walkway at the end. There are 2 exits, the stairs leading to the walkway and a door leading to a different area.

Plaza
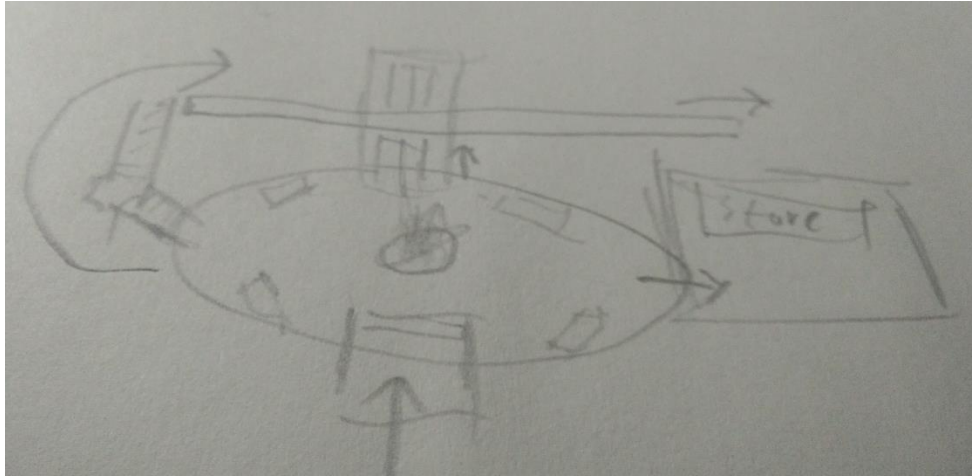
The plaza is next because I want this to be the center point of the level. The plaza is a large open round area with multiple obstacles (think stalls, benches and plants) to give cover. A long walkway will be passing over a large portion of the plaza, this should be accessible through multiple ways (stairs, lift, jumps). In the center I want there to be a fountain or statue in the center so people will have to walk in a circle instead of cutting through the middle. I also had the idea of adding a small secondary area, like a store. A fun idea would be to make the walls of the plaza slanted so you can wallrun over them.
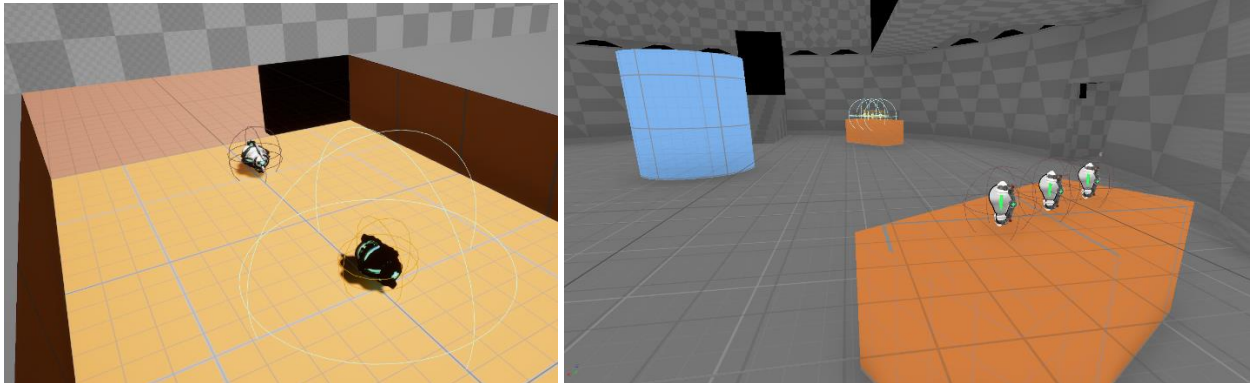
Lower Tunnel
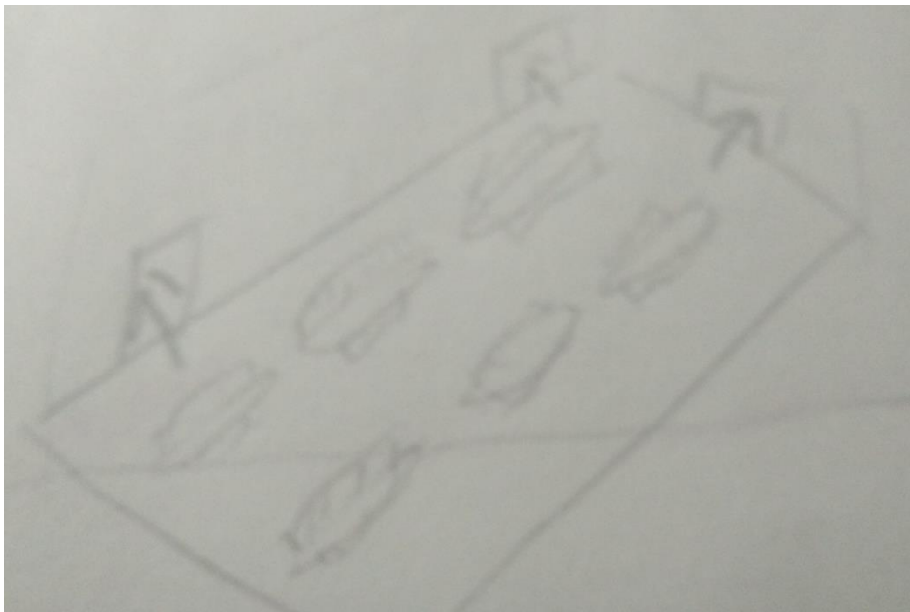
The lower tunnel should be an area where some close quarter fighting will happen, it should be smaller than the other 2 main areas and players should be able to quickly traverse it. Some obstacles I had I mind were benches or check in/out gates.

Upper Walkway

Last up is the upper walkway. This walkway should connect the platform and plaza and give alternative options to get to the main areas. The upper walkway should consists of small hallways with a central hub where all the hallways meet. In the middle of the hub I'd put some plants or info-boards to give a little bit of cover.

Gameplay

Flow

The flow should consist of people moving around the 3 main areas, with the main area being the plaza. By making the walkways (shown in red here) only accessible from one side (dropping down into the main areas) it should create a circular flow that always takes the players back to the plaza.

Pickups

Health Packs

Health packs should be placed in open spaces so the players can clearly see them. The players should also not be totally safe when going for these so placing them in a way other players can still see the players going for the pickups will make it so the players will have to decide whether to go for them or not.

Weapons
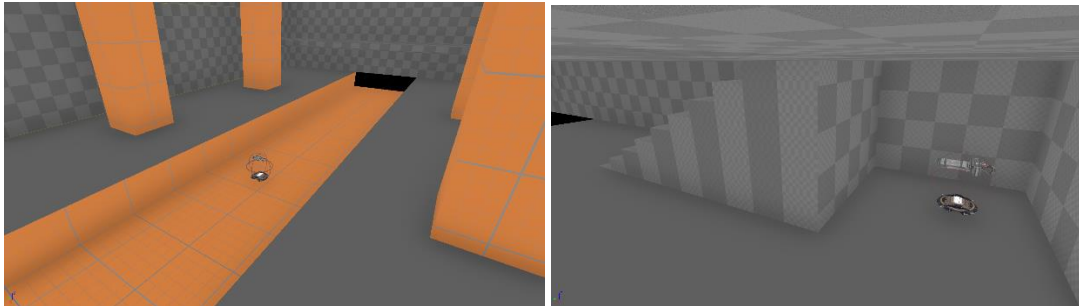
Weapons should be easily reachable but still out in the open. With the stronger weapons being "hidden" in small closed-off spaces. The closed-off spaces will make it so when you go for the stronger weapons you will have to fight your way out again (if other players see you going for them).

I don't want to use all the weapons in this map because some of them are just not made for close quarter combat. These are the weapons I want in this map:

- Impact hammer: standard weapon.
- Enforcer: standard weapon, by placing a second one you can pickup you can dual wield these.
- Bio Rifle: the bio rifle shoots green sticky globs that deal damage when walked against, this will be perfect to set up traps in the upper walkway.
- Link Gun: fast shooting gun with a medium range secondary attack.
- Flak Cannon: a close range weapon perfect for close quarter combat.
- Stinger/Minigun: the "powerfull" weapon of the map, fast shooting and high damage output.

Process

First I started by watching the killzone multiplayer level design video and because I liked how they went step by step I decided to use the same steps to create my level.

Node Based Design

Nodes

Spawns

The player should be safe here, he should be able to orientate himself and decide on a plan of action

Power-Ups

These areas should have the strong/important pickups. Players will have to decide if they want to go for kills in the combat areas or if they want to get an edge by getting pickups. These areas should also have health packs

Combat

The parts where small scale combat will happen. Think 1v1 and small skirmishes

Arena

The area where the players are going to look for a lot of opponents to kill instead of 1v1's

Sniper Spots

The area's where you'll have an overview over part of the level. These areas should give the player a tactical advantage

Routes

Main Routes

These routes should be used most. They should be the fastest and most direct ways however they should be dangerous to be in for long amounts of time.
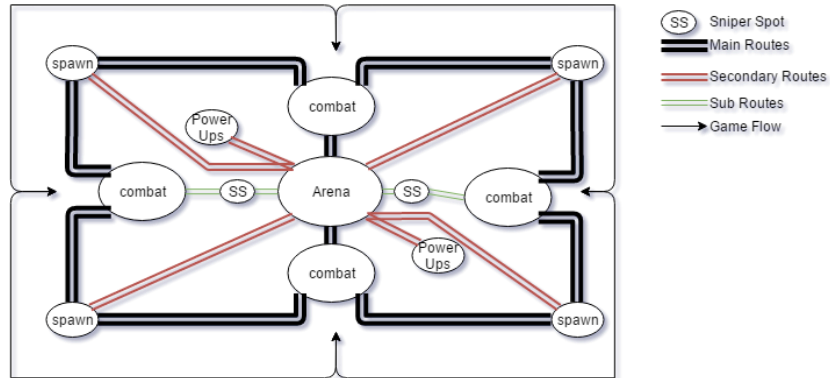
Secondary routes

These should be slower but safer, leading to areas with more cover and should have less danger of combat
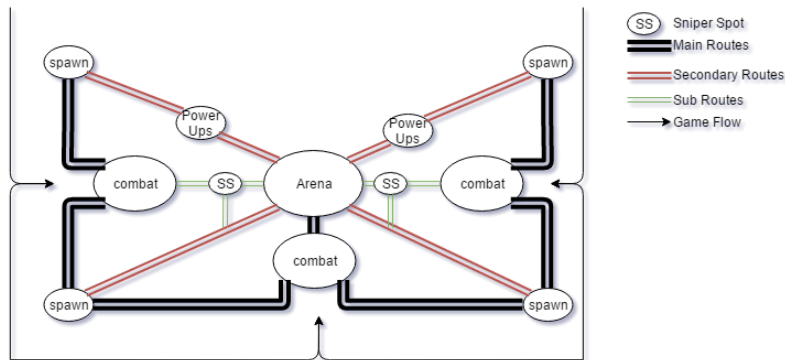
Sub routes

Even slower than secondary routes but they give the opportunity to get to areas unnoticed

Map Schematic

Version 1

At First I had this layout, but I found it to symmetrical so I tried to remove some main routes and connect 2 of the spawns to other areas to force players to have some awareness of where they are on the map.


This gives players to choice to dive straight into combat, look for strong power-ups or contest the sniper spots.

Team Feedback: Don't give players access to strong power-ups from spawn, make then go through an area with a lot of combat first. You want power-ups to be central to everyone.
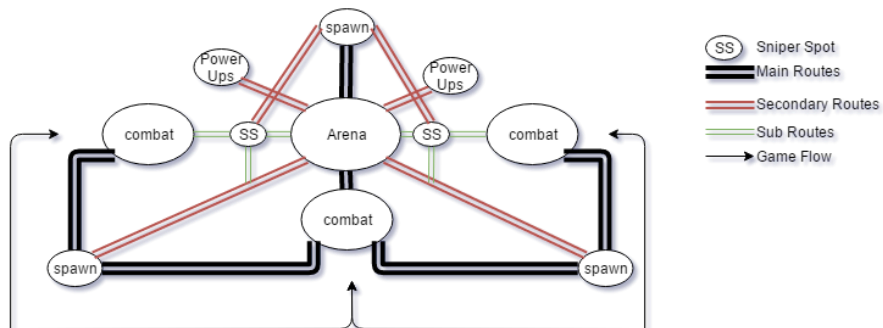
After Doug gave us a lecture I started doing a lot more research and I totally changed the way I wanted the map
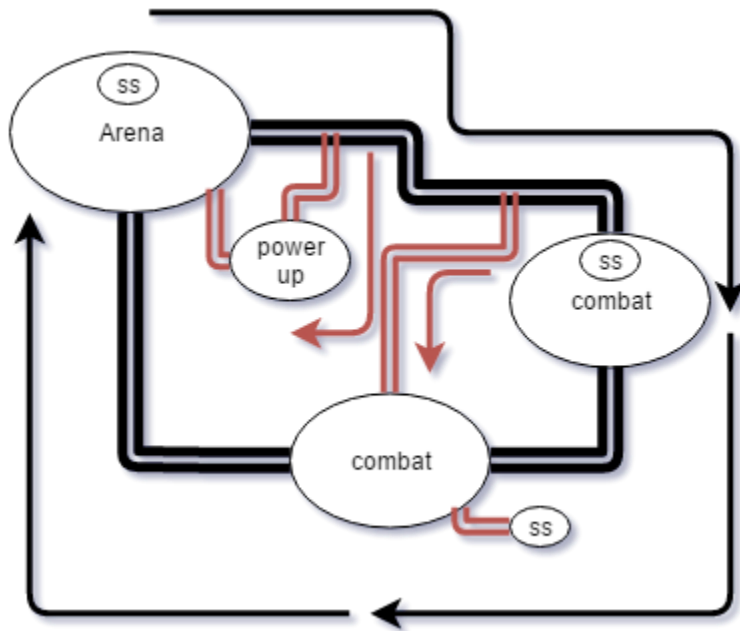

This layout is what I came up with and what I used to start building the level

It gives the player 3 main area's to fight in and has small corridors between them for some more close combat. There are also 2 1-way (2-way with boost jumps) corridors between the main hallway and the arena/one of the combat areas. These 2 corridors are small and without much cover, but give players to surprise opponents by dropping into the combat areas.
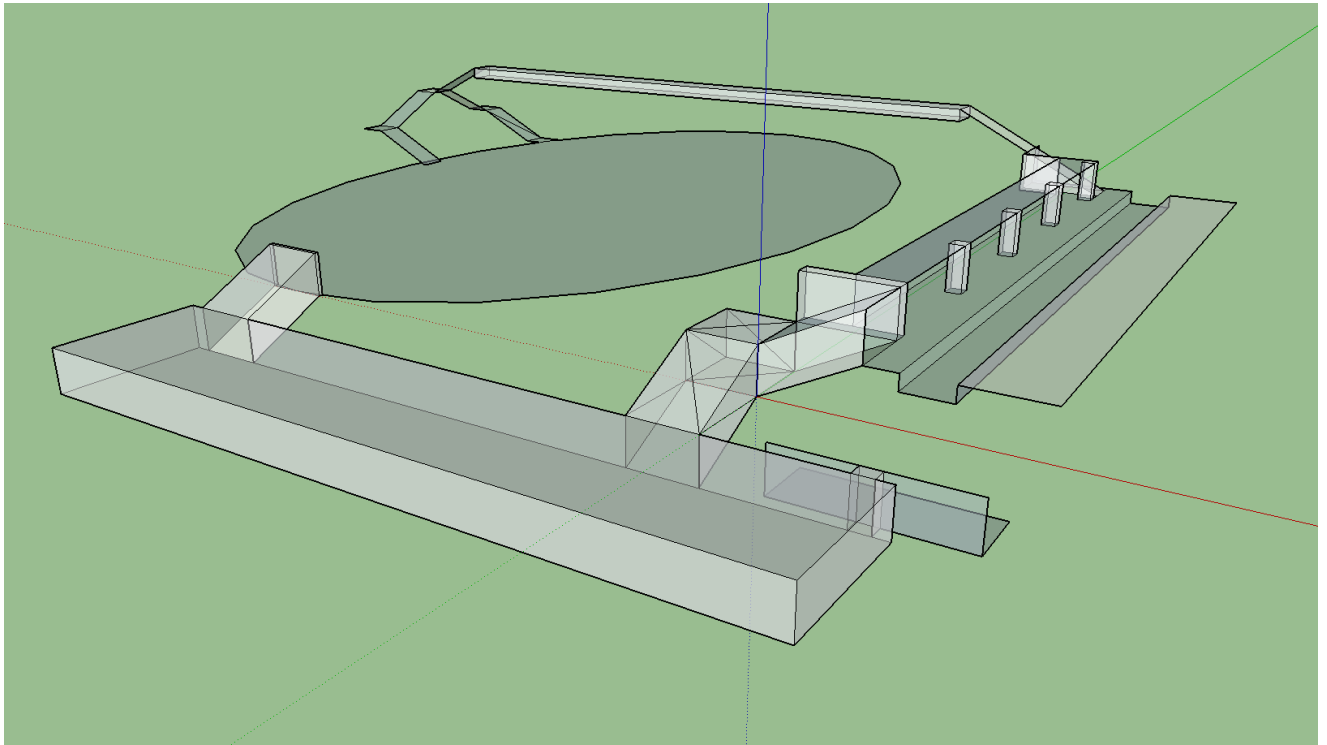
Mockup

Gym
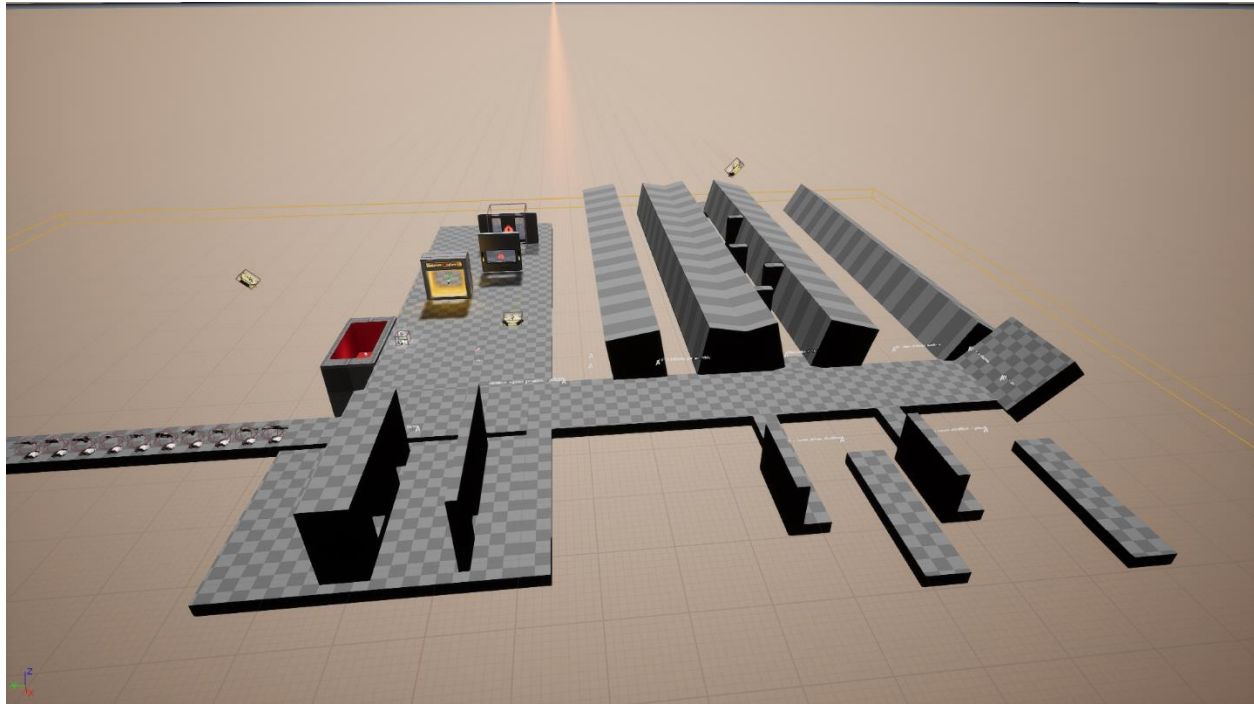
I started by making a gym in unreal by creating a floor and placing some jump-pads and doors on it too get familiar with it. Afterwards I started adding specific area's to test some of the mechanics I found interesting. Of course I also made sure to put all the weapons in there.
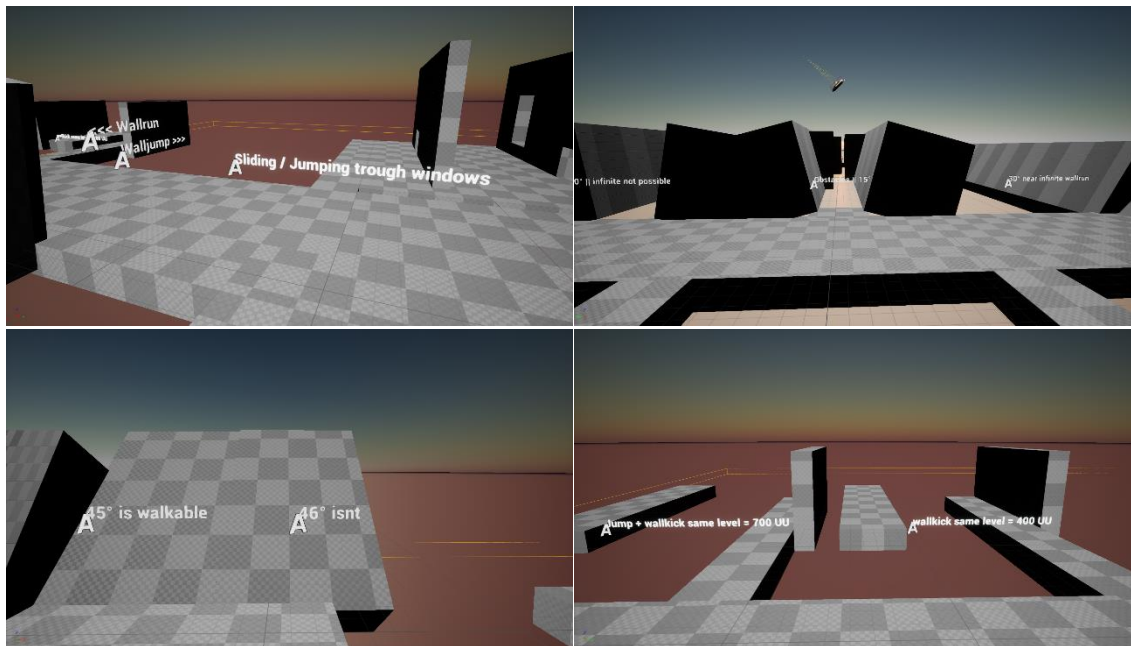

I also labeled all of the parts of the gym with important information.

I started by using SketchUp to create a very basic layout of the level. However after struggling with it for a week having a lot of problems trying to get it to work well in unreal (collisions not working correctly and lots of errors while importing) I decided to start over and create it all with unreal geometry.
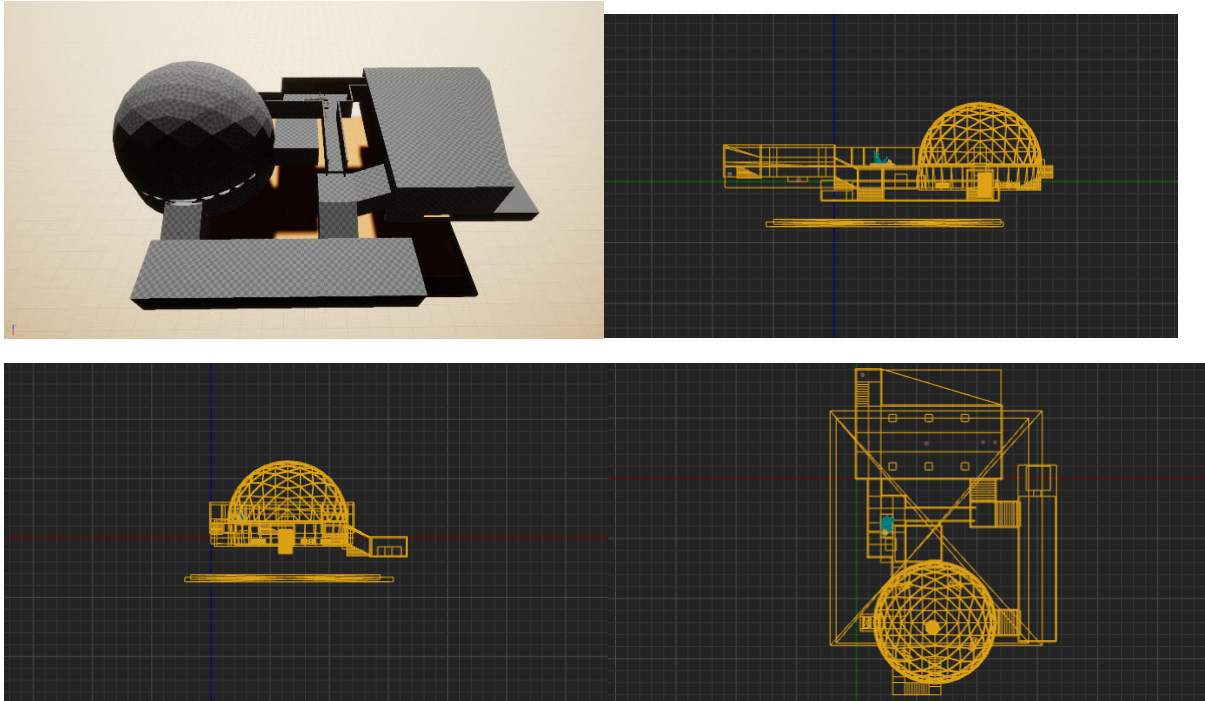
After switching to unreal this is how the first finished mockup turned out (The 2 planes below the level are the sizes of 2 play area's of UT4 level's I researched). After creating a mockup of the level I played trough it a bit to see if there were any obvious oversights and ended up having to make bigger doors and hallways. This was also the first time I found out that relativly small spaces with only 1 floor are not really fun to play in.