

LIZ ENGLAND

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Level Design Mini-Portfolio

This portfolio is designed to give insight into my design processes during construction of a multiplayer deathmatch level for *Unreal Tournament 2004*. An online copy of this document can be found at www.lizengland.com/gardenruins.html.

DM-GardenRuins – UT2004



Screenshot of Garden Ruins, an Unreal Tournament 2004 deathmatch level

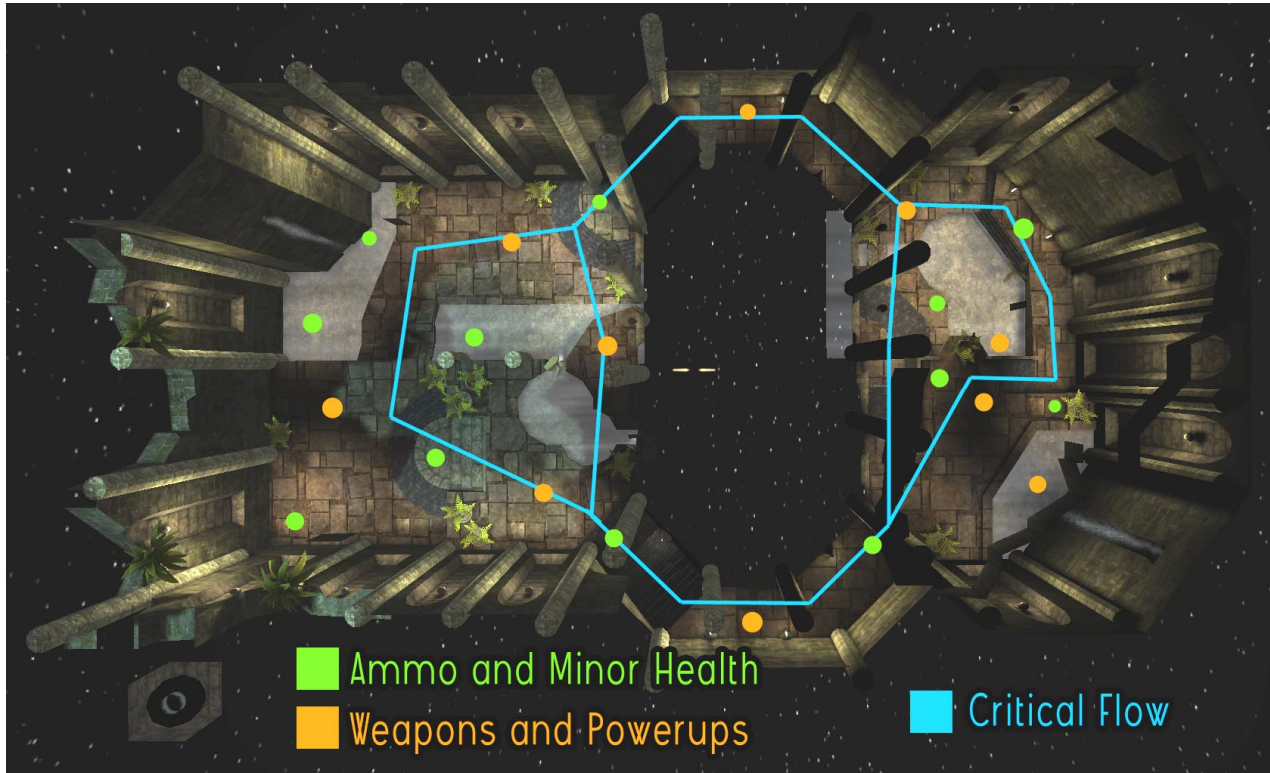
For this project, I was given a block-out of a deathmatch level and told to complete it. The block-out could not be changed except for structural improvements such as stairs and balconies. My task was to add all necessary gameplay and create a unifying visual theme without making any of my own art assets. The development time for the project was only one week, forcing me to optimize my time to create a polished level with balanced gameplay.

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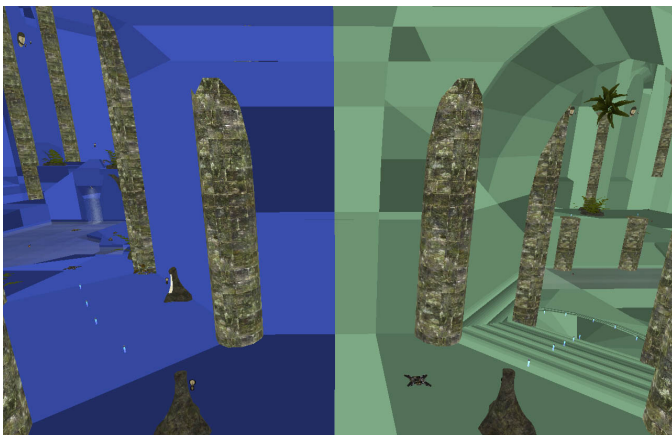
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Technical Aspects



Top-Down Critical Flow Diagram

One challenge that level designers face when creating multiplayer levels is how to pull the player through the level. I placed health vials throughout the level to draw the player along the critical paths. I placed more powerful health pickups and armor pickups were placed in vulnerable spots, while weapons were placed within easy reach of each spawn point.



View of where two zones meet in a corridor

I chose to optimize the level with zone portals to make sure it would play smoothly. I could have put a large occluder in the center of the level between the two rooms but the corridors provided the perfect place to completely section off the two rooms from one another.

By placing vis-portals within the center of the curved corridor, I minimized the chance of the player seeing into the opposite zone and rendering it.

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Visual Aspects



The original blockout lacked any textures or visual theme. I chose a theme that I found personally interesting. The style resulted in a mix of cathedral-like archways and columns mixed with Alhambra-inspired pools of water and lush plant life.



To create an atmosphere of aged ruins, I chose stone textures covered with moss. I polished the atmosphere by adding fountain waterfalls to create visual movement throughout the level and the constant low hum of water splashing into the pools. Crickets and soft rustling in the wind were added in different areas to continue the theme of life within the environment.

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I used irregular BSP brushes to cut into walls and ceilings for a view of the foggy night sky, allowing the player to feel immersed in a larger world rather than trapped in a box. However, after the first few brushes, the hall-of-mirrors effects appeared. To remedy this issue, I optimized the brushwork, changing the order in which they were built and eliminating a large number of them while keeping the exact same effect.

