



<b>IMPORTANT NOTICE</b>	
<b>THIS LEVEL IS NEITHER MADE BY NOR SUPPORTED BY 3D REALMS</b>	
Title:	<b>Simpler Times</b>
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ModDB:	<b>Ledsbourne</b>
Filename:	<b>ALEXCITY2.MAP</b>
Date released:	<b>2023-12-23</b>
My other releases:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Small parts in Community Build Projects 3 (2003), 4 (2003) and 6 (2004),</b></li><li>• <b>Alex City 1: Bank Heist (2003):</b> <a href="https://msdn.duke4.net/hotalexcity.php">https://msdn.duke4.net/hotalexcity.php</a></li><li>• <b>Back in Business episode (2020):</b> <a href="https://www.moddb.com/mods/back-in-business">https://www.moddb.com/mods/back-in-business</a></li><li>• <b>Submachine (2021):</b> <a href="https://www.moddb.com/mods/submachine">https://www.moddb.com/mods/submachine</a></li><li>• <b>The Conundrum (2022):</b> <a href="https://www.moddb.com/mods/the-conundrum">https://www.moddb.com/mods/the-conundrum</a></li><li>• <b>Der Zorn Gottes (2023):</b> <a href="https://www.moddb.com/mods/der-zorn-gottes">https://www.moddb.com/mods/der-zorn-gottes</a></li></ul>

Misc. author info:	Civil/wind engineer and researcher from Poland. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any comments or feedback regarding the level, I am always very happy to hear it!
Additional credits to:	Beta-testers: <b>Aymeric Nocus (MRCK/ck3D)</b> , <b>Cedric Haegeman (Sangman)</b> , <b>Devon Lewis, DNSKILL5, Maarten</b> and <b>Merlijn van Oostrum</b> and <b>Ryan Rose (Quakis)</b> ;  <b>Semicharm</b> for ideas/inspiration on the intricate elevator effects;  EDuke32 developers for all the QoL improvements, such as sloped sprites, TROR and Polymost renderer;  Duke's modding community and players for support, feedback and inspiration from their awesome maps and mods.
Other acknowledgements:	I'd also like to thank other mappers who had a strong influence on my style and work over the years (besides my beta-testers, whose impact was also very strong!), mostly: Pascal Rouaud, Billy Boy, Bob Masters, Alejandro Glavic, Kevin Cools, Bob Averill, William Gee, Luciano Gallo (Gambini), Mister Sinister, High Treason/DXZeff, Mikko Sandt, Artyom Brullov.

Play Information	
Episode and level:	E1L1
Single player:	Yes – designed for it.
Cooperative 2-8 players:	No.
DukeMatch 2-8 players:	No.
Difficulty settings:	Yes – Piece of Cake, Let's Rock and Come Get Some. The respawns are also affected by the selected difficulty setting. Come Get Some difficulty is recommended for either seasoned players or subsequent replays of the level.
New sounds:	Yes, some additional quotes from <b>Duke Nukem: Manhattan Project</b> , <b>Duke Nukem: Time to Kill</b> and <b>Duke Nukem Forever</b> . All of the new lines were downloaded from either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="https://www.101soundboards.com/boards/11219-duke-nukem-manhattan-project-sounds">https://www.101soundboards.com/boards/11219-duke-nukem-manhattan-project-sounds</a></li> <li>• <a href="https://archive.org/details/DukeNukemVocalCollection">https://archive.org/details/DukeNukemVocalCollection</a></li> </ul>
New music:	Yes, <b>Symbolic</b> by <b>Death</b> (music & lyrics by <b>Chuck Schuldiner</b> ) as the soundtrack for the map. There is also an alternate theme music used for intro/main menu, which is a variation of <b>Grabbag</b> , original Duke Nukem theme by <b>Lee Jackson</b> . I have no idea who is the author of this remix.
New graphics:	Yes, although they are just the original tiles merged into groups to save on the resources and mitigate sprite rendering issues.
New/changed CONs:	Yes, although no game changers – mostly small and cosmetic adjustments. There are some new monster variants.
Demos replaced:	None.

INSTALLATION AND COMPATIBILITY INFORMATION	
This level was designed for <b>EDuke32</b> – download it at: <a href="https://www.eduke32.com/">https://www.eduke32.com/</a>	
Designed and tested on EDuke32 versions:	<b>r10212</b> (2023-04-05) – <b>r10454</b> (2023-09-11)
<b>Installation:</b>	Unpack the contents of <b>SIMPLER_TIMES.ZIP</b> into your Duke Nukem 3D directory. It is recommended to also use the EDuke32 version included with the release to ensure the proper compatibility of all the effects and mechanics in this map. Run <b>EDuke32.exe</b> , select “ <b>Simpler Times</b> ” from the <b>Custom game content directory</b> and click <b>Start</b> to play. Remember you need the <b>original, legal copy of Duke Nukem 3D</b> (in particular, <b>DUKE3D.GRP</b> file) to play this level! Make sure that none of the files in your Duke 3D directory have the same names as the ones listed in <b>File list</b> section, otherwise these files will take precedence over the files from the mod (watch out for the CON files in particular).
Preferred renderer:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• This level was designed for <b>Polymost</b> renderer, which is the recommended way to play it;</li><li>• The map should be compatible with Classic 8-bit renderer too, as not everyone can run Polymost, but it will not look as good with Classic (mostly due to how the renderer handles sprite clipping and how the smoother sprite rendering under Polymost was abused for some of the effects and details);</li><li>• Polymer was never considered and is not supported.</li></ul>
Recommended screen resolutions/ FOV setting:	Screen resolutions between <b>1024x768</b> to <b>1920x1080</b> . This only really affects the viewscreens. The map was designed with default FOV (field of view) setting of <b>90</b> and it is highly recommended not to change it.
HRP or 3D models compatibility:	<b>Not supported.</b> Might cause visual glitches within the map.
External gameplay mods compatibility:	<b>Not supported.</b> The level comes with its own CON files that modify the behavior of some enemies and objects, so playing it with different mods is pointless. Might cause gameplay balance issues, sequencing and progression problems or other errors within the map.
Voxels compatibility:	<b>Not supported.</b> A lot of the sprite structures in this map would not look correct with voxels. The map uses additional art, which is based on the original tileset, so in some places it would look largely inconsistent with voxels. Furthermore, due to the level’s size and openness, the framerate may slightly drop in the outdoor sections, so using voxels would potentially only exacerbate this issue.
Recommended MIDI driver:	As the custom music for this level is provided in MIDI format, it will sound different depending on the selected MIDI driver. The recommended MIDI driver is <b>Windows MME</b> . Using OPL3 Emulation sounds largely different, but not completely off – if you want to use it, I recommend setting OPL3 Boost to 3.5.



Construction	
Base:	New level from scratch.
Build time:	<p>550 hours (not including testing and writing of this document), I've kept track of that for once. It was started on 2021-04-05 and worked on during the following periods:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 2021-04-05 – 2021-04-13;</li><li>• 2021-05-02 – 2021-05-17;</li><li>• 2021-07-07 – 2021-08-11;</li><li>• 2021-12-10 – 2022-01-01;</li><li>• 2022-01-16 – 2022-03-27;</li><li>• 2022-06-06 – 2022-08-04;</li><li>• 2022-08-16 – 2022-08-31;</li><li>• 2022-09-29 – 2022-10-07;</li><li>• 2022-10-27 – 2022-11-14;</li><li>• 2022-12-04 – 2022-12-15;</li><li>• 2023-03-27 – 2023-04-11;</li><li>• 2023-04-25 – 2023-05-15;</li><li>• 2023-10-30 – 2023-12-19.</li></ul> <p>In the meantime, I have also designed and released <i>The Conundrum</i> episode and <i>Der Zorn Gottes</i> level.</p>
Editors used:	Mapster32, BAFed, GIMP, Dukeres, Notepad++
Known bugs/problems:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• When outside, from certain perspectives, some distant sprites might glitch out of view due to too many sprites rendering at once. This should not affect the gameplay in any way and is more akin to drawing distance in some modern games;</li><li>• The framerate might slightly drop in the outside part of the map, but once again this should not affect the gameplay in any way;</li><li>• There is a slight – really, really slight – possibility of the game crashing because of the “Too many sprites spawned” bug. Triggering it would require almost deliberate input from the player, such as using GODMODE and awaking all the enemies at once or detonating pipebombs all around the level, simultaneously destroying most of the destructible objects;</li><li>• The door to the office in the garage might be a bit difficult to open at times, but they are not locked and might just require a couple more tries. The room behind this door is not mandatory for progression anyway;</li><li>• Some of the objects (e.g. chairs, tables or lamps) are not blocked – this is not a bug, but a deliberate design to accommodate for Duke's fast movement/gameplay functionality.</li></ul>

May not run with:	HRP/Polymer/3D models/custom mods. The level breaks original Build limits of sectors/walls/sprites and uses newer features such as the True Room Over Room, sloped sprites, texture rotation or sprite no-shade, so it will not run properly under original Duke Nukem 3D.  This level is not compatible with other mods or custom DUKE3D.GRP files.
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### COPYRIGHT / PERMISSIONS

- This level is non-commercial and completely free. As such, it cannot be distributed commercially or as part of any commercial add-on.
- Authors **MAY NOT** use this level as a base to build additional levels (unless it is for personal use of course). However, I encourage you to explore the map in Mapster32 and break it into pieces for scientific/learning purposes!
- Please do not explicitly copy parts of this map into your own levels – or at least ask me before you do, I can be easily reached via e-mail or on duke4.net forums/Discord.
- You **MAY** distribute this level through any electronic medium, share it on your website or send it by e-mail as long as you include this ReadMe file, the contents of SIMPLER\_TIMES.ZIP and anything else that came with it intact with no modifications. If you share it on your website or make a YouTube playthrough video, please tell me, I'd love to see it!
- This level is my own creation.
- Music and sound files are creations of various artists, mentioned explicitly in the sections above. They can be downloaded freely from the Internet. Should the authors, performers or legal proprietors of these tracks or sound files not agree with my non-commercial use of them, please contact me and I will cooperate.

### Gameplay hints:

- Your mission is to collect the materials related to Duke and his past in the warehouse – check the viewscreens for references and press “use” key to collect them!
- As a side-quest, you can save the babes captured by the aliens – similarly, press “use” key and watch them celebrate their freedom by dancing for you! There are 9 babes in total and for saving them all, you will receive a reward – however, make sure none of them gets killed or it won't be possible to complete this side-quest!
- Let the map naturally guide you for mandatory progression – or explore everywhere and leave the beaten path to find secrets and extra supplies!
- Interact with *everything* as it may prove rewarding; keep an eye on small details and hints, some which might involve rather exotic game mechanics...
- Prioritize the most dangerous monsters during larger fights to kill them first; use attacks of different monsters against each other to conserve your ammo!
- Some secret places might be easy to spot, but require some extra thinking in order to reach/unlock.



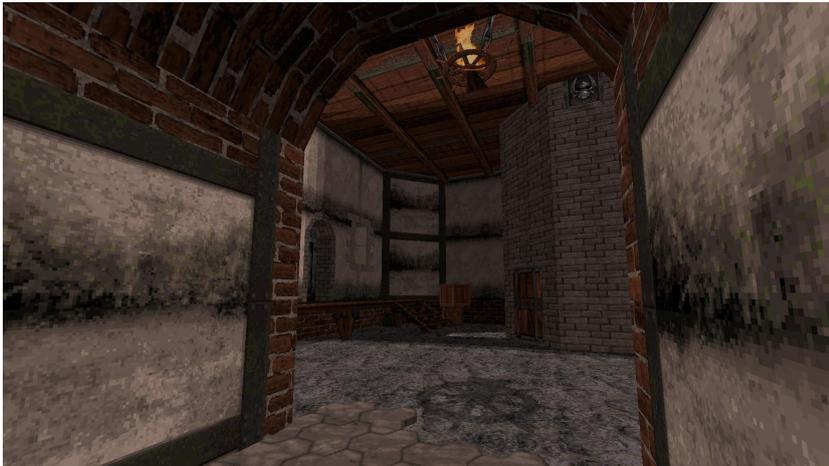
## General description and features

Brand new map for Duke Nukem 3D with an urban/city theme and a huge, open layout. There is a lot of room for exploration and interaction, but with a fairly linear and perfectly clear progression. My goal was to combine and balance together the technical prowess of advanced Build Engine effects, detailed, realistic design and open



landscape with the sense of conceptual grandness, into a kind of *dream level* that everyone was imagining back in 1996 when they first launched Duke Nukem 3D. The level is an action-packed adventure that should keep you entertained for about 1-2 hours.

As such, ***Simpler Times***, may feel almost like an open-world game, despite being firmly anchored in a 30-year old Build Engine. However, I also wanted to ensure the maximal



accessibility of the map, therefore I aimed at providing a clear progression with a sense of direction for the casual players, while also leaving a lot of room to explore for the *completionists*. I am quite satisfied with the results – below is a list of the main features of the level, hopefully without too many spoilers.

- **Open layout** on the outdoors, with two distinct parts separated by a river and connected through a bridge. The *sandbox* style of the level is emphasized by the natural boundaries of the player area, with the view blocked by buildings and streets rather than abstract walls and dead ends that would still feel quite claustrophobic;
- **The architecture** is a mix of typical European and Northern-American cities, including actual recreations/reinterpretations of some modern and historic real-life buildings – check the ***Inspirations*** section below for further information on that;
- **Most of the interiors are accessible** and serve a purpose in the progression. You will visit a gym, a fancy restaurant, an old docking crane, a hotel with a lobby and multiple rooms, a garage, rooftops, a jewelry store, a waterworks station and a warehouse;
- **Action-packed, explosive gameplay** that will make your journey entertaining and challenging, punctuated by several larger battles. The level is constantly repopulated

to keep you busy and intuitively guide you towards your next target, but there is also some breathing room between the fights;

- **Three difficulty settings**, which also affect the respawning monsters. On "Come Get Some difficulty", you may face up to about 350 enemies! How tough do you think you are?



- A much desired from Duke 3D players possibility to **save the babes** captured by aliens! This is a kind of side-quest and not necessary for progression, however, you should be careful not to harm the ladies during your destruction spree!
- **Plenty of secrets** and optional areas for some bonus exploration – including both the "official" secret places and small interactions that will reward the player with something extra. Stay focused and look out for details!
- **Interactions everywhere!** You can kick a beach ball around, use runways and barbells at the gym, knock on random doors or call the intercoms, use vending machines, watch distant landscapes through binoculars, move or destroy the stuff along your way, play shooting range game, operate cranes and even... order some meals!



- The level may feel almost *classic* at first glance, but is full of **technical nuances** and **complex effects**, made possible with the most recent **EDuke32** additions used in creative ways. You can check the **Design and effects** section for more elaborate descriptions of some of the most complex ones;

- **Story-driven progression**, with in-game world building and a somehow auto thematic plot that plays around with breaking the 4th wall and tries to re-imagine the character of Duke Nukem in the modern world. The background story for the level is presented in the next section.

## Story

It was about 10 years since the events in Duke Nukem Forever, and it's been a rough 10 years for Duke. He was labelled a misogynist for some odd reason (despite loving women of all colors, shapes and sizes more than anyone else in the world!), his fans have grown up and seen through him as being something else than the



idealized all-American hero image they kept from their childhood and, due to some weird legal actions, he even lost the rights to his own media image. The worst part, however, was definitely the fans – on one hand, they kept nagging him for “betas”, and on the other, they started to dig into the stuff Duke would rather no one find out about (including a drunk incident involving a donkey).



They kept nagging him for “betas”, and on the other, they started to dig into the stuff Duke would rather no one find out about (including a drunk incident involving a donkey). This was far too much! Duke decided to withdraw from public life (being hit with cancel culture helped with it) and only poke his nose whenever the Earth needed to be saved from another alien invasion.

Spending his time defending what was left of his good name over at the Internet forums, drinking booze with his only remaining friend Dylan and getting laid a lot (he's still Duke, after all), he was living up his days in a world where he no longer fit. However, this was soon to change...

Some guy got in touch with him and claimed he knows about an old warehouse where all the beta materials from Duke 3D and DNF are kept. This was a chance for Duke to finally regain his good name! If he could only destroy that warehouse, getting rid once and for all of all the embarrassing, shameful stuff – and also of the stuff people





kept begging him about all the time!... Having paid the guy with still sealed, boxed copies of his 90s games, Duke got his hands on the coordinates of the warehouse and set out for a trip to Alexanderville, a picturesque town by the river where the warehouse was located. Renting a room in the Otterlook Hotel, he started making plans on how to hit the

warehouse.

Little did he know that all the damage done to his image was an intricate revenge campaign set out by the aliens, who would not satisfy themselves with his death, but wanted to humiliate him and ruin his life for the thousands of their brethren he has slain over the last 25 years! Learning that he is coming to the very town where they kept all their evidence against Duke,



the aliens have decided it's high time to finish the revenge by killing Duke right there.



### Resources used:

- 2 299/4 096 sectors,
- 16 384/16 384 walls,
- 16 130/16 384 sprites,
- 5/256 bunches.



**Inspirations (WARNING: this section might contain spoilers!)**

One of the most important aspects of level design is setting a desired *vibe/mood* for your map. In this case, I wanted it to play with the title even more, giving another layer to the meaning. *Simpler Times* reflects the story – with how Duke was The Hero *back in the day*, when everything was much more simple and straightforward, the action



movies (and video games) didn't have to be nuanced and deconstructive and the world, in general, was black and white. However, the title hints also at the atmosphere of the level itself, which I aimed to be kind of *nostalgic*, with strong summer holidays vibe (even somehow directly referenced with the town fair taking place at the plaza) – a nod back to the idealized childhood memories and times when our lives felt much more simple. This is also emphasized with the soundtrack selected for the level – the lyrics of Death's *Symbolic* are literally about memorizing the innocent childhood moments and the unnoticeable, yet relentless passage of time. Last but not least, the title reflects my design process itself. The initial idea was to make a level that would feel *classic*, with plenty of nods and design references to the original Duke 3D levels and even early user maps (which were a large part of my childhood and still feel quite fascinating, even if dated), such as certain texture picks – but at the same time make it overly complex and ambitious “under the hood”, centered



around strong sequencing and spectacular effects. This goes as far as to somehow satisfying the once naïve imaginative concept of creating a *dream level* which would feel completely open and “like real life”. Below are some of the more direct inspirations for certain buildings and effects present in the map.

The central effect of the level, which is raising the water level in the river after solving a simple puzzle, followed by a boat cruising in, from which you retrieve a crucial item, is directly inspired by the legendary Point & Click Adventure game *The Mystery of Time and Space (MOTAS)* by Jan Albartus. This was one of the key elements on which the initial premise of the level was based. Ironically, the simple motif of a boat passing under a bridge is yet another trope which plays with my personal understanding of the *dream level* idea – this time, referencing a memorable mission from the original *Grand Theft Auto (1997)*, where

you had to toss a briefcase from a bridge to a motorboat passing underneath it, which always made me wonder if it was possible to traverse the water boundaries in that game. Here are some comparison screenshots between *MOTAS* and *Simpler Times*.



As mentioned, several buildings in the map are Build reinterpretations of real-life ones, with the most distinct one being the docking crane in the central part of the map, which you visit to retrieve the blue keycard. It is based on *The Crane*, National Maritime Museum building in Danzig, Poland. Below are comparison photos of the original and its recreation – obviously only the external façades were inspired, while the inside was completely my own invention. The surrounding architecture was not recreated either, as – luckily – the level does not have to obey the strict urban planning regulations.





The church you can see in the distance is based on traditional American white wooden churches. In particular, I used photos of the Waterbury Congregational Church in Vermont (originally dating back to 1824) for reference. The message on the sign in front of the church, which might be difficult to read from within the game, is unironically an actual message once presented by the Bella Vista Baptist Church in Florida...



The building between the docking crane and main street is based on another landmark, an art deco Old Docks House located in Preston, England. This building lends its architecture

particularly good towards a Build Engine reinterpretation due to mostly blocky, regular geometry and fairly simple “texturing” of the façade. Comparison can be seen below.



Some of the other buildings that are located outside of the player area were also loosely inspired on real-life architecture – there is one based on the 30 St Mary Axe in London (more commonly known as *The Gherkin*), designed by Norman Foster and Ken Shuttleworth and one based on the .KTW office building in Katowice, Poland.



The hotel lobby was heavily inspired by studying a lot of different photos of such places – some of these inspirations were already detailed in one of my previous maps, *Submachine*, where I used the same type of angled hanging ceiling lights.

Duke’s boat – *The Leaking Beta* – was based on various stock images of yachts and motorboats found around the Internet. Similarly, the red car parked next to the bridge is based on Ferrari model 308 GTS. Some comparison photos are shown below.





Another architectural detail which might not come as obvious during regular gameplay is the shape of the water fountain located next to the restaurant. Its design is inspired by the works of M.C. Escher. From certain perspectives, it can be perceived as an “impossible object”, an optical illusion where something is instantly

perceived as a representation of a 3D object, but cannot exist as such. In this case, this is based on a simple play with perspective between similarly looking objects where the contours are difficult to detect at first glance.

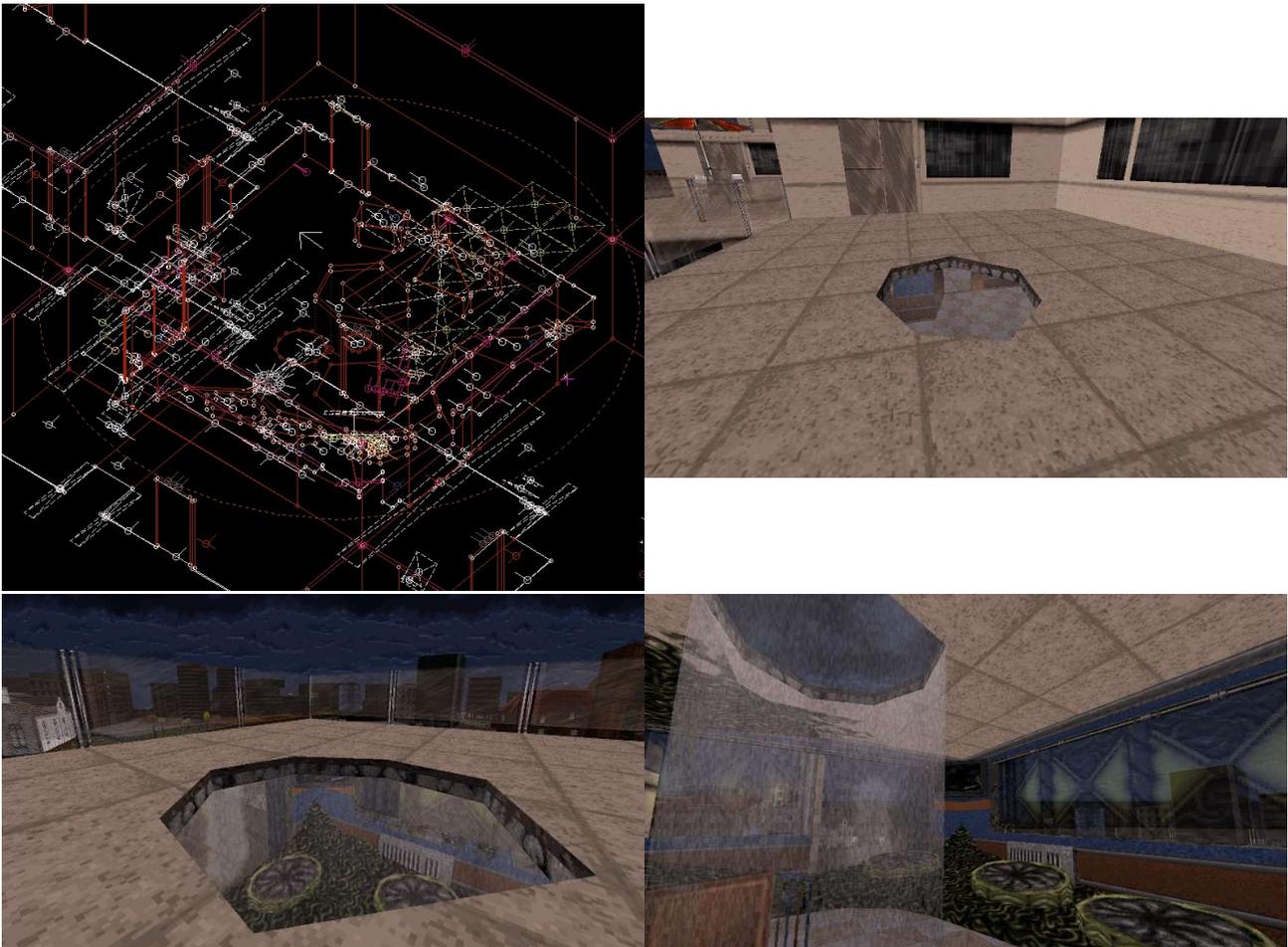
Last but not least, the name of the restaurant, *La Sirena*, is a reference to the starship SS *La Sirena* (NAR-93131) from *Star Trek: Picard*, a vessel commanded by captain Cristóbal Rios. Adequately, the interior of the place is decorated in pictures of foreign planets and star systems. Furthermore, the joint serves *mediterranean* cuisine, which is not a typo...



**Design and effects (WARNING: this section might contain spoilers!)**

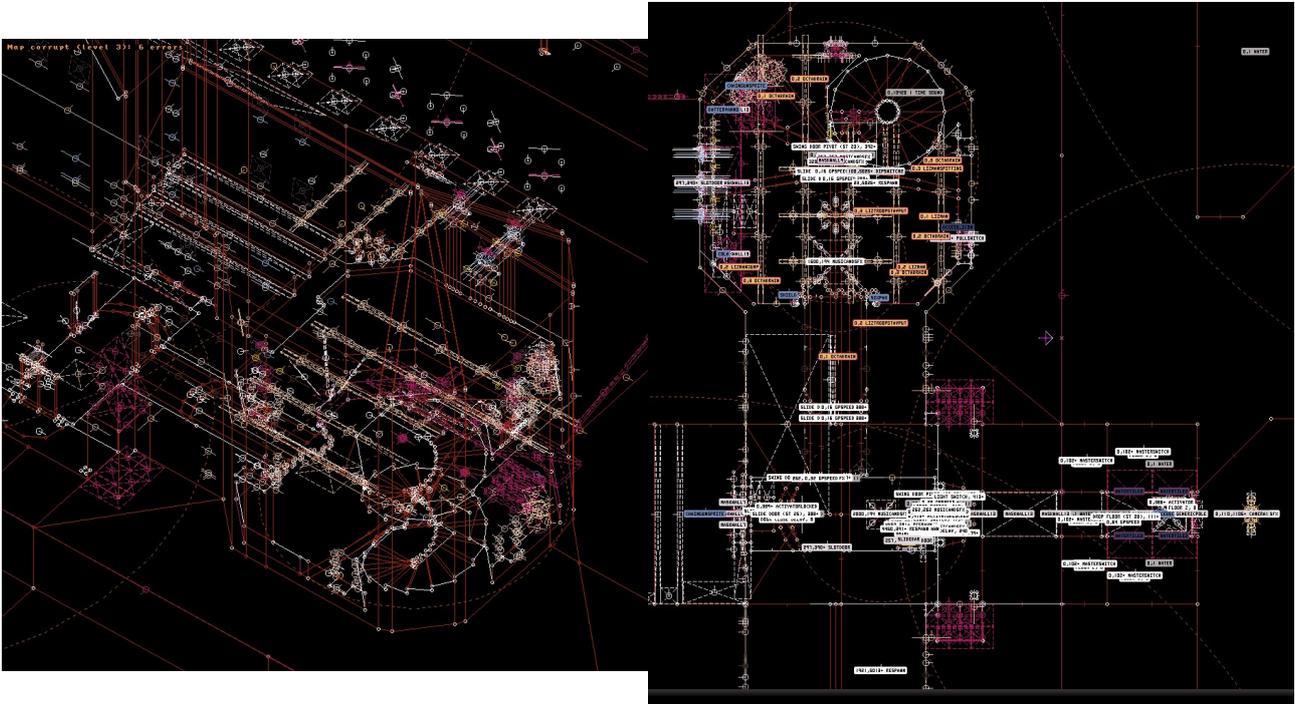
As it became a kind of tradition during several of my previous releases, at the end I am providing a technical breakdown of some of the more complex effects that were designed in this map. I will start with the more basic Sector Over Sector (SOS) and True Room Over Room (TROR) tricks that do not involve any particular effects but just complex geometries.

The “impossible” BillyBoy windows are making a comeback in style here, also – similarly to *Der Zorn Gottes* – in combination with TROR, to make an effect that would be otherwise impossible to achieve. This can be observed in the alien-infested hotel room – you can see both the inside of the hotel and what’s behind the windows through the hole. Unfortunately, this technique is considered a map error in the recent EDuke32 builds, therefore has to be set up in an older build and then copied back into the map, which is quite a cumbersome procedure. Not really related to this effect in particular, but the hotel corridors use 3 levels of regular SOS stacked on top of each other.

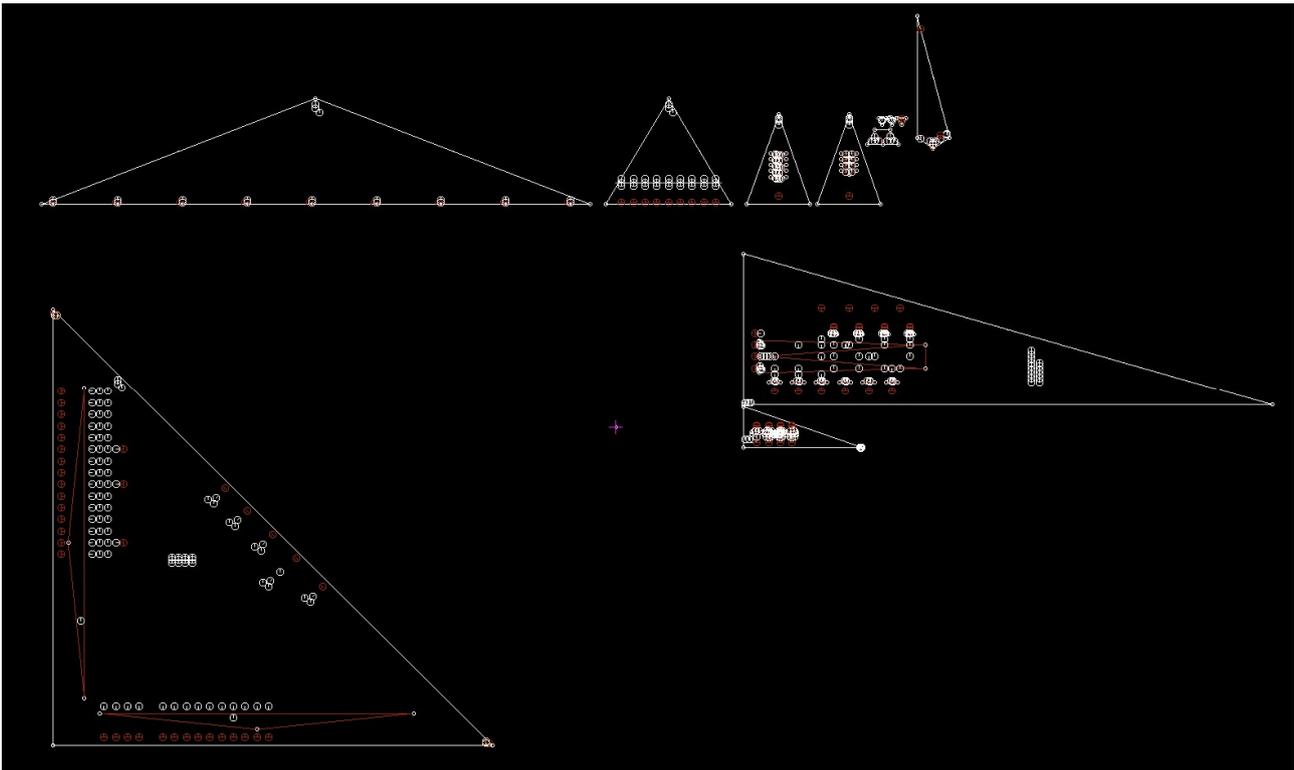


Another use of BillyBoy windows can be observed in the crane – in particular, at the part where you can take a peek through the window to see the blue keycard being lifted down (also at the door blocked by a fence in the entry hall). The setup of the whole crane building, however, is more interesting due to how it is structured – the rooms inside can be entered from outside through a regular door in the only possible part that could be deemed actually

enterable! While we're at it, the lifting effect is more complex than it might seem, as the keycard has to go down around an area that will – at a later time – move up. This required some extra play with masked floors and changing sectnums.



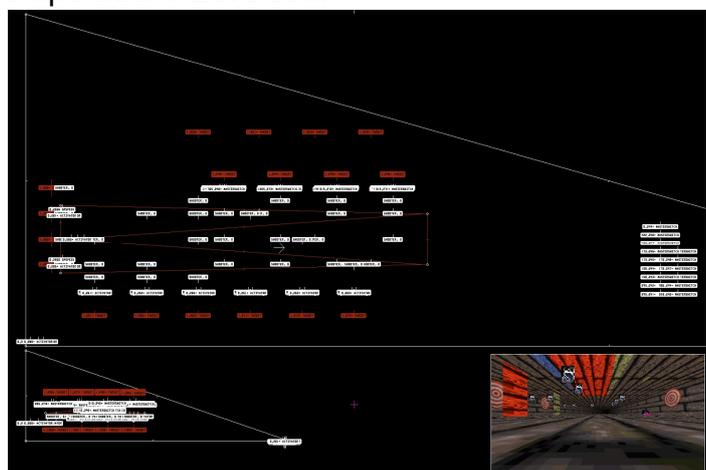
Now there are two effects which are particularly innovative that I would like to write a bit more about. However, first let's take a look at the levels "machinery", where the logic gates that use shrinker shooters and targets operate. This is a particularly efficient method of controlling the more complex effects as well as synchronizing between different ones or even allowing for the effects to be triggered by a combination of different events purely through level modifications. As far as I'm concerned, this technique was first introduced by DXZeff/High Treason. The logic machines in this level are located in the bottom left corner of the grid, far away from the actual playable part of the map itself. They silently control a lot of the effects taking place in the map.



From upper left, the first two “triangles” control the failure and success of the “savior of the babes” quest. The next ones control, respectively, the water level puzzles, collecting the items in the warehouse, police car sirens, some minor effects like slide door auto-close and – the rightmost one in the upper row – potential encounter with the pig cops attacking the player from the hotel elevator at the beginning of the map if they decide to leave their room through the door rather than jumping out of the window. The large triangle in the bottom left corner controls the difficulty setting-based respawns. This is done in the same way as in *Submachine*, which describes the effect in more details – however, I think it was quite crucial for this map, given its size and openness. Finally, the two triangles on the right in the bottom row control the hotel elevator, which might be the most complex effect I have created so far in the Build Engine.

So, what are the principles of this elevator’s operation? Let’s see:

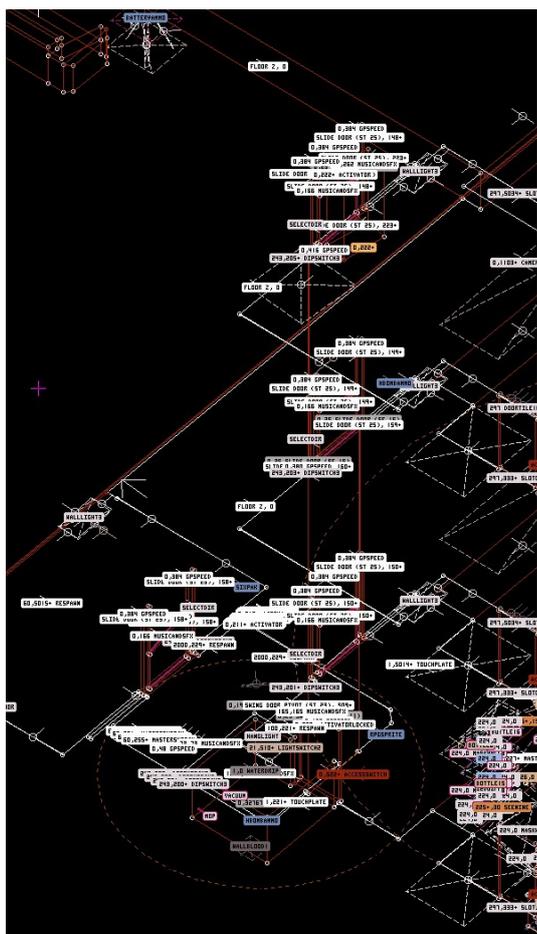
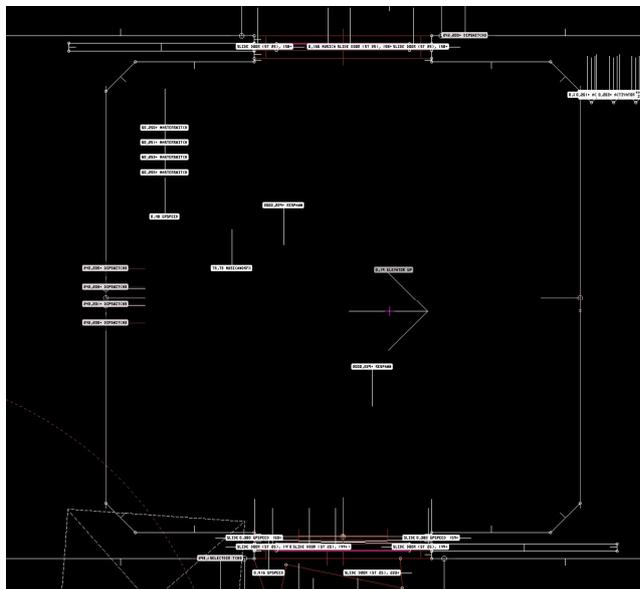
- Travels between 4 different floors: 0, 1, 3 and 5;
- May travel directly from any given floor to any other one;
- The doors operate automatically, open as soon as the elevator arrives and close before it starts its operation;
- Floors 1, 3 and 5 are located directly above each other;
- The floors stacked on top of each other should be visible from inside;



- There is a delay for pressing the buttons, so the player cannot “jam” or “break” the elevator by frantically pressing “use”.

The effect uses a sector tag 19: “elevator up” for its basic functions. This effect looks for the Z (height) coordinate of the floor of the closest (in Z direction) sector that is bordering the elevator, and travels there. Now this can be abused by setting up a bunch of small “dummy” sectors with SE31 (rise floor) that will instantly change their floor’s Z height upon activation, to have the elevator travel to several different destinations. This was well documented a while ago by Semicharm in his *Build Tricks: Fun With Elevators* tutorial, which can still be downloaded from:

[https://dnr.duke4.net/dl/02d2cbc/ele\\_trk.zip](https://dnr.duke4.net/dl/02d2cbc/ele_trk.zip)

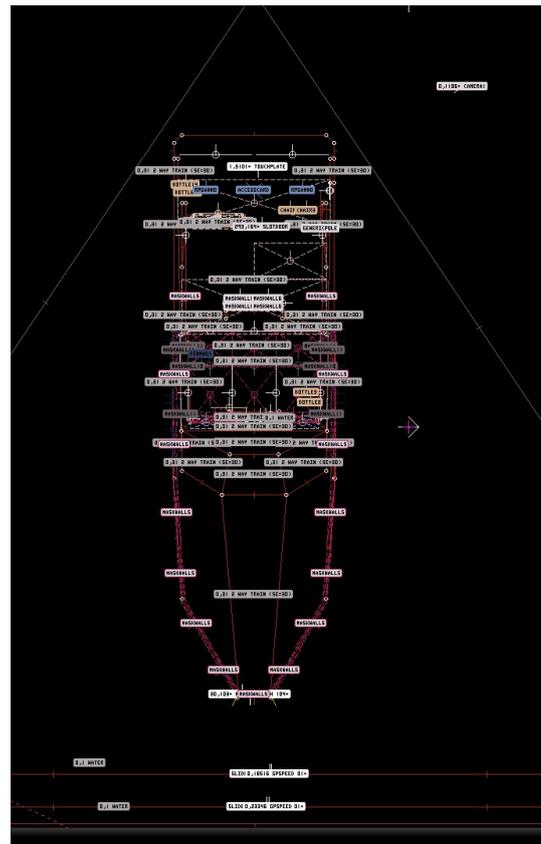


Now the tricky part is having the three of these destinations stacked on top of each other, with a possibility of entering each one of them and seamless transition. This was done by using two dummy “slide doors”, which in this case just drag the vertices, each time creating a different “hole” in the same wall, depending on the desired position. As their movement speed cannot be adjusted, the elevator’s speed had to be set to match their movement in this case, which is why the elevator may feel a bit slow. Synchronizing these effects correctly was the most complex part of the effect. The rest was really just details. Synchronizing the door opening for the travel between each two different locations turned out surprisingly less tedious than expected. For the effect to take full advantage of multi-level layout, the elevator doors had to be “seen through” with a small window inside, so that the player can really feel their “true 3D” vertical journey. Finally, a safeguard had to be established to make sure it is impossible to jam the elevator – a delay will even occur if someone accidentally (or deliberately) decides to travel from e.g. floor 1 to floor 1.

The other effect that is worth discussing is the yacht passing through the river after the water level has been raised. The ride itself is a pretty basic 2-way train effect, only made complex because of the geometry of the yacht – for this to work, each node has to “touch” the main train sector (resulting in lots of resources required) and each sprite has to be located in this main train sector (which can be fairly easily achieved by sectnum manipulation).

Now the complexity starts due to the dam operation – the path of the 2-way train is very complex in this case. The water raising is done with 3 different effects to achieve different results:

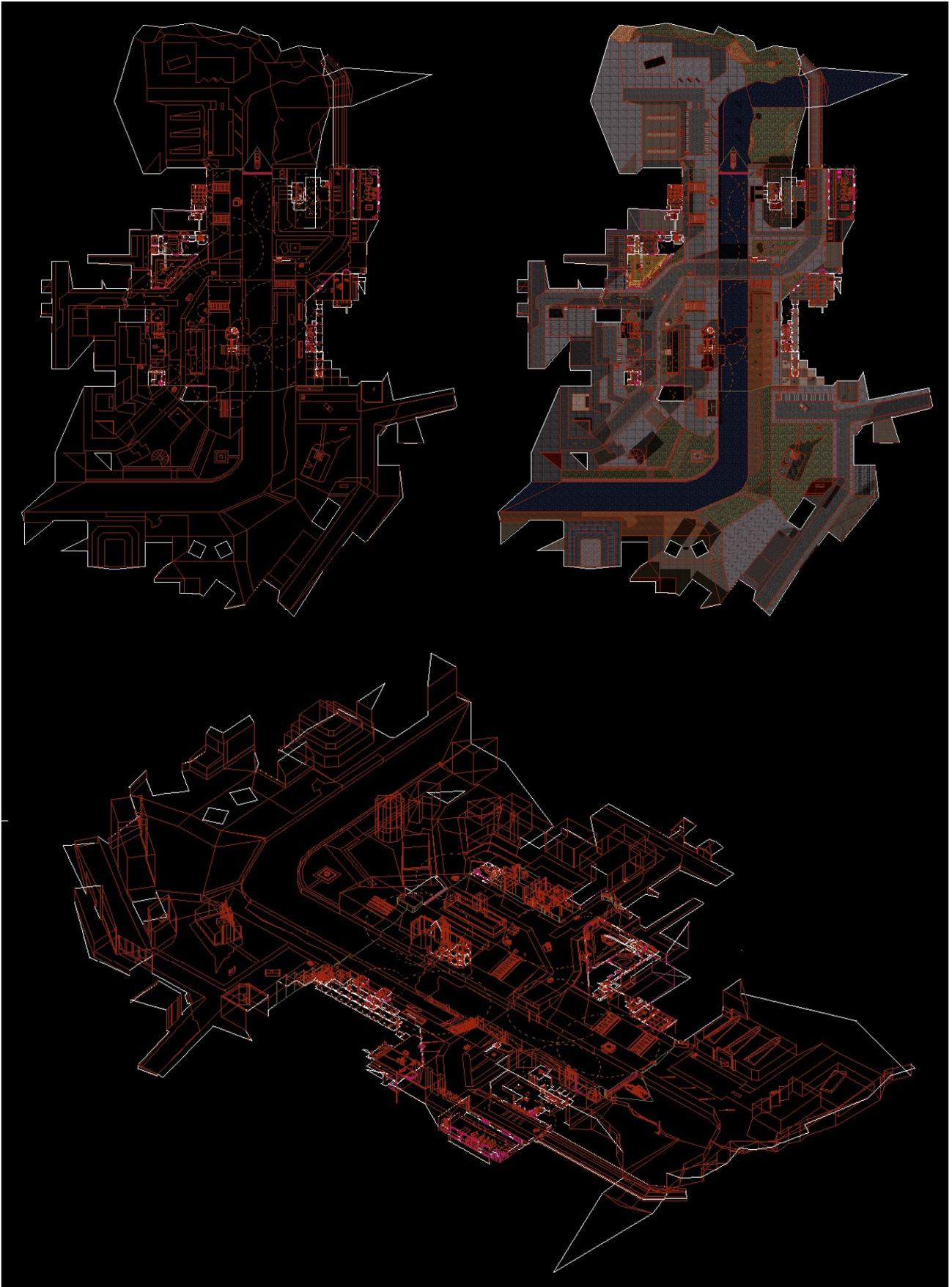
- Basic SE31 (rise floor) effect for most of the water sectors to the south of the bridge;
- ST28/SE21 (drop floor) effect – this one is considered obsolete due to SE31 being much easier to use, but it has one significant difference – on the contrary to SE31, it does not carry sprites within the sector. However, the disadvantage is taking up the sector lotag bit, so that the sectors cannot be labeled as water. It is used for some sprites near the crane as well as for the part of the river that is outside of the player area;
- ST25/SE15 (slide door) effect – for the part of the river north of the bridge, the raised water level is basically carried over a very long distance by a dummy slide door to carve out a path for the boat, which has to be in a single sector.



The last of these effects also determined how the dam operates, i.e. being carried by another slide door that makes it disappear into the docking shore, to get rid of any lines between the boat and its destination. Unfortunately, this whole effect does not look like how water would “realistically” flow in such circumstances, furthermore, due to the set speed of the slide door effect, it takes a while for everything to get into its place. This is why the player has to be locked for some time in the water level control room, where an arena type of fight takes place with several subsequent waves of enemies to give them something to do. The final problem to solve was related to the Locator sprite, which sets the destination of the 2-way train. It has to be in the parent sector of the 2-way train, where it can move – but in this case, it is originally far away from it. Luckily, once again sectnum manipulation could be applied to have the Locator placed correctly and at the same time, keep it in the “path” sector.

This whole effect – or at least the barebones of it – was one of the first things designed in the map. The aim was for this to be the center point of the level, largely justifying its dual layout separated by the river and connected by the bridge, so before proceeding with the design, I had to make sure it works as intended. The last thing to tackle was properly directing the player, so that they don’t miss the boat’s passage – which was adjusted after watching some of the video footage kindly provided by my beta-testers.

For a closure of this manual, I am providing plan views of the map and a 3D grid. Enjoy!



File list – contents of SIMPLER_TIMES.GRP			
Level			
Filename	Description	File size	Last modification
ALEXCITY2.MAP	User map “Simpler Times”	1 295 KB	2023-12-21
Graphics			
Filename	Description	File size	Last modification
Tiles014.ART		5 960 KB	2023-12-19
Music			
Filename	Description	File size	Last modification
SYMBOLIC.MID	Level soundtrack: “Symbolic” by Death	124 KB	2023-09-22
THEME.MID	Main menu music: “Grabbag” by Lee Jackson (remix/alternate version)	23 KB	2004-01-23
Sound files			
Filename	Description	File size	Last modification
babe01.ogg	Custom line from DN:MP	45 KB	2022-12-06
babe02.ogg	Custom line from DN:MP	68 KB	2022-12-08
babe03.ogg	Custom line from DN:MP	129 KB	2022-12-08
babe04.ogg	Custom line from DNF	69 KB	2022-12-08
babe05.ogg	Custom line from DNF	120 KB	2022-12-08
babe06.ogg	Custom line from DNF	143 KB	2022-12-08
babe07.ogg	Custom line from DN:MP	94 KB	2022-12-08
babe08.ogg	Custom line from DN:MP	67 KB	2022-12-08
babe09.ogg	Custom line from DNF	140 KB	2022-12-08
BCHBALL.VOC	Bouncing ball sound from “Duke Caribbean: Life’s a Beach”	7 KB	2023-12-07
bird.ogg	Custom line from DN:MP	79 KB	2023-11-18
bumpy.ogg	Custom line from DNF	79 KB	2022-04-14
charade.ogg	Custom line from DNF	70 KB	2022-04-08
crowbar.ogg	Custom line from DNF	64 KB	2022-04-08
DEFLATE2.VOC	Bouncing ball sound from “Duke Caribbean: Life’s a Beach”	37 KB	2023-12-07
engaged.ogg	Custom line from DN:TTK	54 KB	2022-04-08
halfame.ogg	Custom line from DNF	48 KB	2022-04-08
learn.ogg	Custom line from DN:MP	55 KB	2023-11-18

letcook.ogg	Custom line from DN:TTK	64 KB	2022-04-14
light.ogg	Custom line from DN:MP	67 KB	2023-11-18
pigs.ogg	Custom line from DN:MP	63 KB	2023-11-18
roadkill.ogg	Custom line from DNF	29 KB	2023-05-21
rotten.ogg	Custom line from DN:MP	74 KB	2023-11-18
safety.ogg	Custom line from DN:MP	70 KB	2022-04-14
town.ogg	Custom line from DN:MP	55 KB	2023-11-18
windows.ogg	Custom line from DN:MP	51 KB	2023-11-18
<b>Data</b>			
<b>Filename</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>File size</b>	<b>Last modification</b>
DEFS.CON	Definitions of sound and tile names	37 KB	2023-12-19
GAME.CON	Main CON file, altered with small adjustments and fixes	155 KB	2023-12-21
USER.CON	User CON file, with some basic definitions	44 KB	2023-12-22