

SOURCE ENGINE 1 · PROTOTYPE

GOLIATH

An interconnected level that reshuffles the encounters

The prototype aims to design a playable level built on Half-Life 2 mechanics, developed in the Source engine. Rather than a linear path, the level is built as a fully interconnected space that the player gradually unlocks — progression comes from exploring, backtracking, and opening the world rather than moving forward in a straight line.

01 THE PITCH

Tahar has fallen into a coma; the only way back is to enter his dream, find him, and pull him out. The prototype begins the moment the player enter the dream.

◎ OBJECTIVE

ENTER THE DREAM

Tahar has fallen into a coma, consumed by an unknown illness. The player enters his dream to find him, free him, and find a way to bring him back to reality.

◁ INTERCONNECTED SPACE

SHORTCUTS OPEN

As the player explores, they unlock shortcuts and open persistent passages – doors and activated mechanisms – that progressively reshape the environment and streamline navigation, converging toward a single respawn point.

◆ DYNAMIC LAYER

EACH RUN DIFFERS

While the overall layout stays consistent across runs, enemy encounters, situations and events shift dynamically – reacting to the player's progression and actions so every attempt feels like a distinct run.

02 ENVIRONMENT

Tahar's dream is a sewer complex – canals, basins, material-handling storage, and offices. An underground world with no distant landmarks, where architecture and texture carry navigation.



CANALS



TUNNELS



OFFICES



MECHANISMS



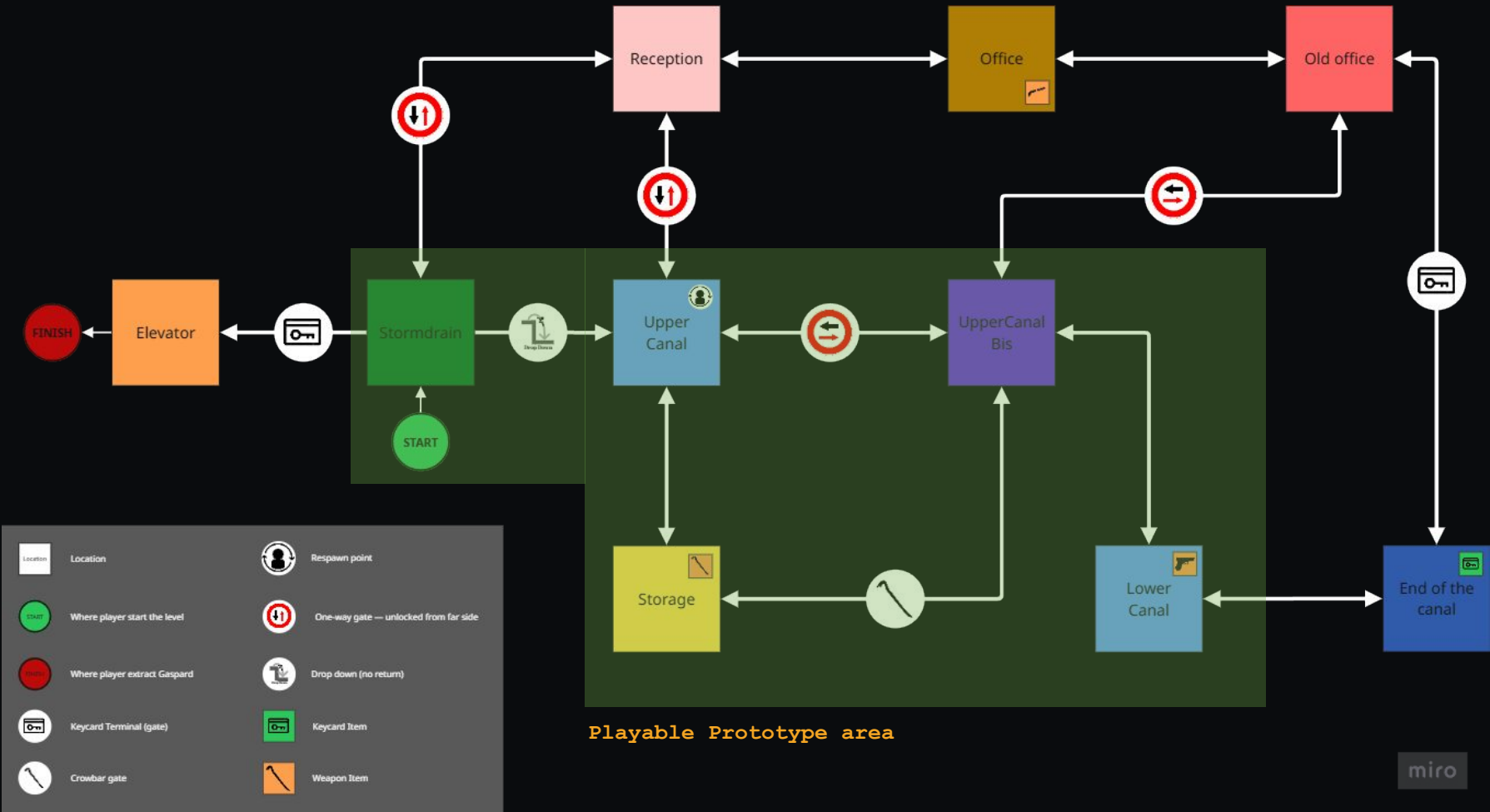
PASSAGES



STORAGE

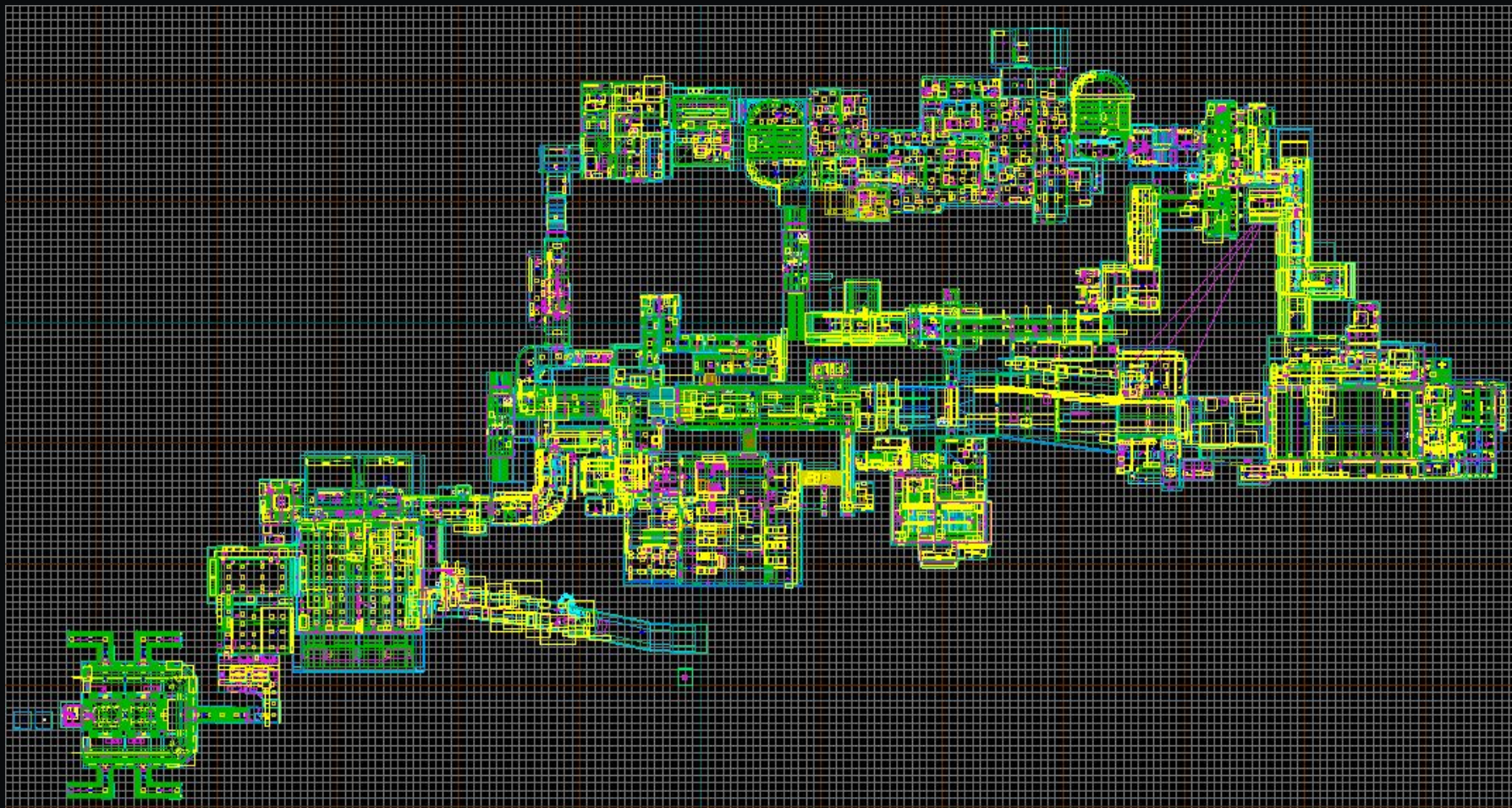
03 LEVEL TOPOLOGY

FLOWCHART · PROGRESSION GRAPH



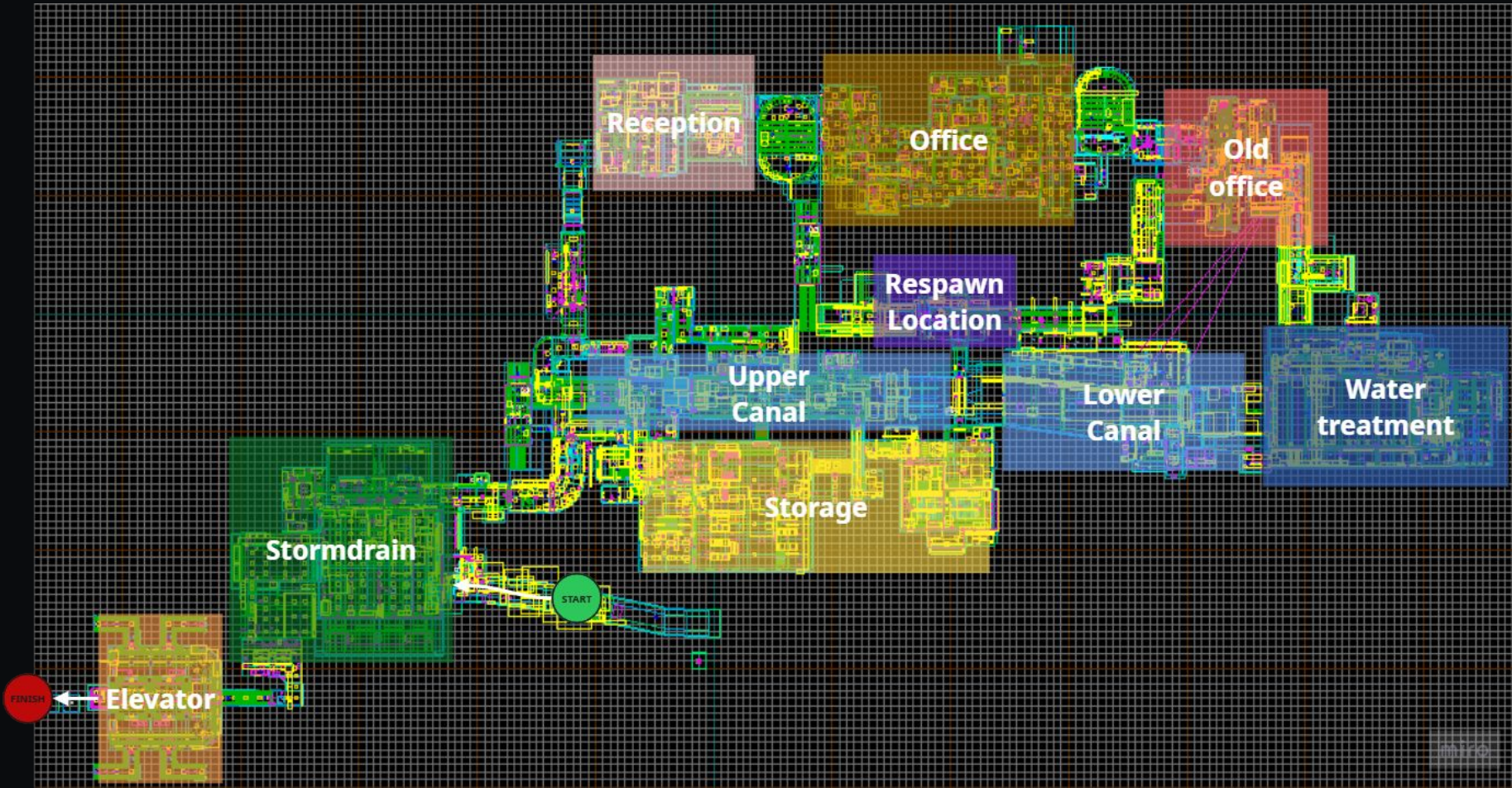
03 LEVEL TOPOLOGY

TOP-DOWN · ANNOTATED ZONES



03 LEVEL TOPOLOGY

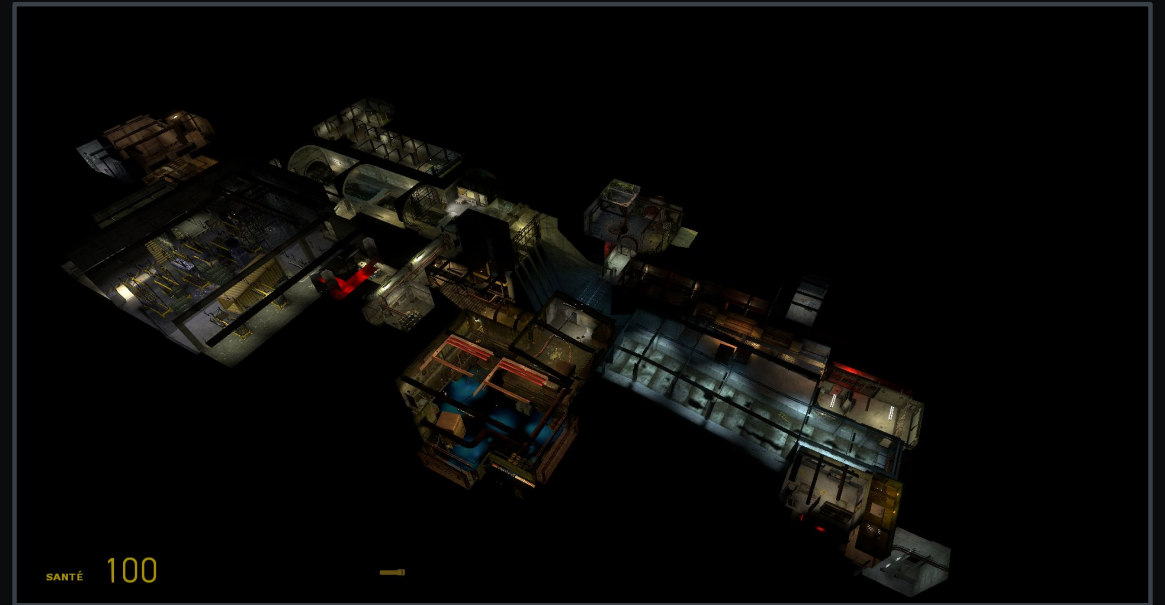
TOP-DOWN · ANNOTATED ZONES



04 SOURCE ENGINE VIEWS



STORMDRAIN



CANAL

05 FIRST SCREEN

► FIRST WORDS

*“Entering another person's dream is always a disorienting experience.
You enter it the same way you awaken from sleep.
But do not dwell on it. Every minute matters.*

Find Tahar. Find a way to help him. And bring him back.”

06 WATER TREATMENT

The introductory space to Tahar's dream – simple, accessible, and designed to orient the player. Core inputs are assumed known but refreshed throughout. The player enters to find the basin already flooding, with Tahar's cries echoing and the PA warning of rising water.



LOCATION OBJECTIVES

- Give the main objective: find Tahar, help him, bring him back.
- 3C kit refresher – crouch, jump, ladder climb, button interaction.
- Environmental introduction – establishing the visual language and atmosphere.

KEY ELEMENTS

- Chase framing – rising water creates urgency without a literal pursuer.
- Button usage – restoring power as a low-stakes first interaction.
- Enemy showcase – secured encounters with zombies and barnacles, safe but engaging.

PLAYER JOURNEY

The player enters to a flooding basin. With time pressing, they navigate the space, locate the mechanism, and stop the flood. Next objectives then arrive via Tahar's dialogue or UI fallback: reach Tahar, find the access key at the far canal, return and free him.

07 UPPER CANAL

The backbone of the level. As an underground environment, a strong primary axis replaces landmark-based navigation, while distinct upper and lower sections – set apart by architecture and texture – reinforce the water theme and give a clear sense of progression.



LOCATION OBJECTIVES

- Primary axis – spatial anchor where landmarks are absent.
- Shortcut system – unlocked progressively, easing return runs.
- Exploration – off-route branches rewarded with health and shield.
- Narrative layer – hints that others are trapped in the dream.
- Gated progression – the crowbar is a mandatory pickup.

KEY ELEMENTS

- Wall mines – tutorial encounter first, then a higher-challenge room.
- Crank doors – first mounted and ready; second must be found in the world.
- Crowbar – gated item, mandatory before progression continues.

PLAYER JOURNEY

The player reads the canal's linear structure, ventures off the main path, and discovers rewards and narrative hints. Shortcuts open progressively. They learn wall mines and crank mechanics across escalating situations, then acquire the crowbar – unlocking the next stage.

08 STORAGE

Split into two distinct phases, gated by the crowbar. Before obtaining it, the player navigates a restricted version of the space, clearly communicated through visual grammar. Once acquired, backtracking opens previously inaccessible areas and extends the playable space.



LOCATION OBJECTIVES

- Two-phase structure – pre and post crowbar, with clear visual gating.
- Backtracking reward – new areas, simpler navigation, surprise encounters.
- Melee introduction – zombies and headcrabs as first combat.
- Crowbar utility – breaking planks, padlocks, and obstacles.

KEY ELEMENTS

- Headcrab foreshadowing – a staged sighting before the player can defend.
- Melee combat – post-crowbar, against zombies and headcrabs, controlled.
- Environmental destruction – crowbar on planks and barriers opens the world.

PLAYER JOURNEY

The player enters noticing blocked areas they cannot yet access. A headcrab is foreshadowed, creating tension while they remain safe. Once the crowbar is obtained the space opens: gates break, routes unlock, enemies emerge. Backtracking feels rewarding, not obligatory.

09 RESPAWN LOCATION

A central hub – a safe room the player returns to on death, with access to all unlocked routes. Inspired by Dark Souls' bonfire, it rewards progression by making navigation faster and more connected. A ringing phone booth is the sole tangible link to reality.



LOCATION OBJECTIVES

- Hub structure – central crossroads onto every unlocked shortcut.
- Safe room – a Resident Evil save room: guaranteed safety and relief.
- Checkpoint onboarding – teaches the respawn and save mechanic.

KEY ELEMENTS

- Ringing phone booth – audio-visual grammar that pulls the player in.
- Symbolic anchor – the phone as the sole connection to reality.
- Save mechanic – interacting saves progress and sets the respawn.
- Dynamic vs persistent – runs reshuffle enemies; layout stays fixed.

PLAYER JOURNEY

The player hears a phone ringing in the distance. Drawn to it, they find a booth – the only link to reality. Picking up saves progress. On death they return here and choose a route back. Each run feels familiar yet dynamic: encounters and hazards shift, layout and opened doors persist.

10 GATE SYSTEMS

Several gate types control player flow and structure progression.

Gates are persistent from one run to another – once opened, they stay open.

© TOOL-GATED



Areas locked until the player acquires the right tool (e.g. crowbar), rewarding backtracking and expanding the playable space.

© ENVIRONMENT-GATED



Requires interacting with the environment to proceed – restoring or cutting power to open the way forward.

© MECHANIC-GATED



Requires a crank to activate, introduced progressively across two escalating situations.

© DROP DOWN (NO RETURN)



Controls navigation flow – guides the player through a full level loop or locks them into a more complex puzzle sequence.

11 NEXT LOCATIONS · WIP

Blockout underway for the level's second half, the end of the canal, and the office complex that closes the loop.



END OF THE CANAL



OLD OFFICE



OFFICE



RECEPTION



ELEVATOR (and leave the Tahar's dream)