

THE ENTITY

LEVEL DESIGN DOCUMENT

(c)Alexander Stopher, S55.88

Alexander Stopher- UWE BSc Games Technology (Game Level
Design)
alexander2.stopher@live.uwe.ac.uk



A level from a 3D platformer based around Weird Fiction, that transports the player into the shoes of a Policeman investigating a series of bizarre disappearances.

The Ancient World crosses with the Modern World in a not-so-great way. An ancient Entity is captured by a genetics-research Facility that attempts to create superhuman Augments with the Entity's powers, by infecting and kidnapping the residents of the small Scottish island community where it is based.

The Entity overpowers the Facility and kills the housed residents in cold blood... its only weakness is slumber. Unless someone accidentally ventures into its Chamber, it will not awaken, and the world will be safe forever.

Unfortunately, the policeman (the player) does just this, which results in the Entity's destruction of the Island. Will our policeman escape? That's down to the player.

DOCUMENT HISTORY

Version	Date	Author	Summary of Changes	Areas Changed
0.01	26/10/18	A Stopher	Initial document layout.	N/A
0.021	04/11/18	A Stopher	Added sections: General Story , Objectives , and Characters .	Core Design subtopics.
0.022	11/11/18	A Stopher	Moved Story section into 2.2 , created 2.1 Time and various graphs.	Level and Core Design.
0.03	12/11/18	A Stopher	Created Level Flow diagram .	2.3 Level Flow.
0.04	19/11/18	A Stopher	Inserted sketches . Added sound section .	3 & 4.
0.05	21/11/18	A Stopher	Added Emotion section .	5 Emotion.

Table of Contents

1 Core Design	0
1.1 Abstract.....	0
1.2 Objectives.....	0
1.3 Characters	1
1.4 Play Areas.....	2
1.5 Objects and Challenges.....	3
1.5.1 Challenges	5
2 Situation.....	7
2.1 Time & Pace	7
2.2 Narrative	8
2.2.1 Level Start- The Dockside.....	8
2.2.2 The Village.....	8
2.2.3 The Facility	8
2.2.4 The Caves	9
2.2.5 The Cell.....	9
2.2.5 The Escape (Final Act)	10
2.3 Level Flow.....	11
3 Sketches	12
3.1 Maps.....	12
3.1.1 Overview	12
3.1.2 Dockside.....	13
3.1.3 Village.....	14
3.1.4 Facility (Perimeter Defences).....	15
3.1.5 Facility (Overview).....	16
3.1.6 Facility (Room 1)	17
3.1.7 Facility (Room 2 & Closet 1).....	18
3.1.8 Facility (Room 3)	19
3.1.9 Cave.....	20
3.1.10 Cave (Platform Sketch).....	21
4 Sound	22
5 Emotion.....	24
5.1 Infrasound.....	24
5.2 Modified Physics	24
5.3 “Just in Time” (JIT) Events.....	24

1 Core Design

1.1 Abstract

In a small isolated Scottish island community, a genetics research company has been carrying out highly illegal genetic engineering research on human subjects, including the residents themselves (unbeknownst to them). Recently the residents reported a loud otherworldly screeching sound coming from the facility and immediately after this the Facility became silent (and has been ever since).

The player, as a policeman from the mainland, is sent to investigate this in conjunction to a series of local disappearances, suspected to be linked to the genetic research facility. The policeman is plain-clothed and arrives at night in order to avoid suspicion.

Most concerning are rumours of a single being, an entity of unknown origin. It is currently missing, along with over half the residents of this community. The player's mission is simple: investigate the disappearances and find out what on earth happened to the genetic research facility. The level ends in the player causing a containment breach of the Entity's cell.

This level merges the new and old, and is used as a turning point in the game- levels before this were slow-paced, now it is time to increase the speed and rhythm of the game.

1.2 Objectives

The primary objective of this level is to escape the island, while finding-out the fate of the Augments, villagers, and The Entity.

Other objectives include:

- Collecting powerups inside the Facility to proceed to a blocked-off section
- Collecting security cards within a cave system to activate a portal to Entity's Cell
- Once the Entity is awakened, to escape from the Island within a time limit

1.3 Characters

The Policeman

The character played by the player, a mainland policeman who is investigating a series of bizarre disappearances in a remote Scottish island community.

The Villagers

Inhabitants of the Scottish island community, they are victims of the Facility's research program and as a result are a little strange. Over half have disappeared to an unknown place...

The Entity

The focus of the Facility's work, an otherworldly spirit that has got out of control. It is asleep (most of the time...) and becomes enraged if awoken. Is highly-prized by the Facility due to its ability to affect space and time in its immediate vicinity.

The Augments

The Villagers that were chosen and kidnapped by the Facility as test subjects. They are housed inside the Facility.

By the time the Policeman arrives, they are long dead.

(c)Alexander Stopher 2020

1.4 Play Areas

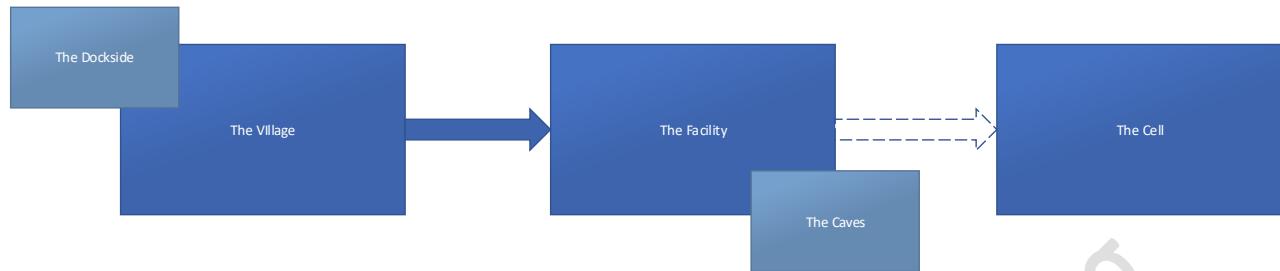


Figure 1- Play areas in The Augments

There are three main areas of the level, with two smaller areas being used. Figure 1 (above) shows how these levels are connected.

These are:

The Dockside	The point where the player first arrives onto the Island (via boat), is a sub-area of the Village.
The Village	The wider play-area that contains The Facility. Contains Villagers and is misty. The Village has electricity, but residents prefer to use oil-based lamps to light the main high-street leading to now what is the Facility- the resulting light flickers and gives an eerie glow.
The Facility	The Facility is the ultra-modern research facility that is the centre of the level. It is ugly in comparison to the rest of the Village and wider Island and its message is clear: stay away. It is protected by an advanced security grid that the player must disable in order to gain access, but this security grid is operating via a battery backup so the rest of the Facility is without power.
The Caves	The Facility was built on-top of the entrance to a vast underground cave network. It is here that the Augments met their fate. This cave system also provides access to a portal, the entrance to the Entity's Cell.
The Cell	A failed attempt to keep the Entity contained. It is here where the Entity can be found and is fast asleep. Like the Facility, the Cell is ultra-modern.

1.5 Objects and Challenges

Objects and gameplay systems associated with this level are:

	Name	Section	Description	Where Found	Collectable?
IMAGE	Boat	Dockside	The boat that the player arrives and leaves in.	In the sea, docked at first but undocked ready for the player when they're escaping.	No
IMAGE	Vials (x3)	Facility	<p>Together these vials combine to form the Superhuman Serum, the brainchild of the Facility (<i>which the player learns from a previous level</i>).</p> <p>Is injected into the body.</p> <p>Grants the player an ability for each vial (but all vials must be collected before they can be used): super-strength, firing rubble as projectiles from their hands, and super-speed. Only effective when in proximity of the Entity.</p>	Various surfaces.	Yes
IMAGE	Syringe	Facility	A specially-designed syringe to inject the Superhuman Serum. Uses electrical impulses when handled to trigger forceful injection into a test subject (used if they are not complying).	Inside an open drawer.	Yes
IMAGE	Security Card (x3)	Caves	Allows access to the Facility's rooms. Three are required to access the Entity's secure containment Cell.	Three are found in the pockets of dead Facility scientists, which are used to access the Cell.	Yes

IMAGE	Portal	Caves	The appearance of the portal is similar to the Black Monoliths seen in 2001: A Space Odyssey when deactivated, and when activated its “doorway” glows red.	Near top cave entrance.	No
IMAGE	Gravity Pockets	Cell	<p>Disorienting to the player- when they walk on another wall the camera angle changes suit to make it look “normal”. Which way is up, and which way is down? The player cannot tell.</p> <p>There is a light source, but it seems to be emanating from all-around and not from a single source, and it randomly flickers.</p>	Within the Cell.	No
IMAGE	Crashed Car	Facility Security Perimeter	<p>It is impossible to discern what caused the crash (the car is in the middle of the road) and which way the car was travelling: to, or from the Facility?</p> <p>There is a single dead body inside. The car is not in flames and it is impossible to tell the smoke (if any) apart from the mist.</p> <p>What's most odd is that the Villagers didn't mention the crash, perhaps they didn't hear it?</p>	Centre of the road within the Facility's security perimeter.	No

1.5.1 Challenges

The challenges in this level are relatively straight-forward, with the game systems gently nudging the player forward by providing hints of what they are expected to do:

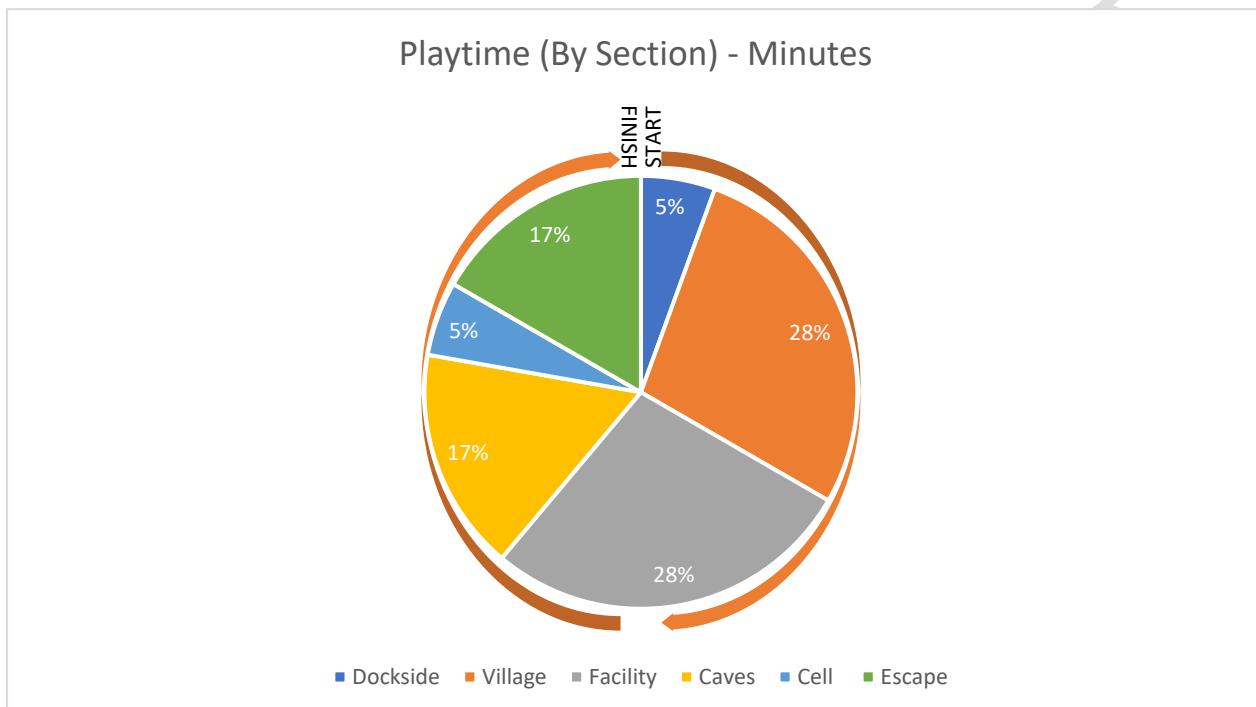
Challenge	Description	How to Defeat
Electric Fence	An electrified fence that surrounds the Facility. Will kill if touched.	There is a small gap in the fence that the player must traverse to avoid being killed. Can be deactivated when inside the building.
Facility Containment System	A metal frame with a laser moving up and down (similar to an airport metal detector, but lethal and with the laser). Designed as a defence against the Entity and test subjects in the event of a containment breech, this containment system will vaporise any organic material that comes into contact with the laser.	Must dodge the laser at the right point in time (this makes the player analyse the laser movement to identify the best time to move through it). Impossible to deactivate (unless the Entity destroys the building, which it does in the Escape).
Heavy debris covering the entrance to the Cave system	Metal and other rubble from the Facility covers the door, rendering it inaccessible.	Must move and blast the rubble out of the way via the abilities obtained via the Super Serum.
Portal to the Cell is deactivated	In order to progress to the Cell, the portal must be activated.	The portal is activated via three separate security authorisations from the Facility's staff, via key-cards. A few Facility scientists are scattered around in the cave (dead), the player must search and collect the three key-cards (and to back to the portal) to proceed.

The Island is being ripped apart	The Entity becomes enraged after being disturbed from its (almost) eternal slumber and starts destroying the Island via harmonics (<i>this is the loud whistling sound</i>).	Must escape the Island before it is destroyed.
Gravity Pockets	Space and time near the Entity is distorted, creating pockets of abnormal gravity, allowing the player to walk on all surfaces of the Cell.	Must disturb the Entity (it is invisible, the player disturbs it by moving about for five seconds inside its cell).

2 Situation

2.1 Time & Pace

The intended playtime of this level is nine minutes, if played as expected and without stopping to pay attention to small details that do not matter:



The Dockside and Cell sections are thirty seconds each due to their elements, and the Village and Facility sections are the longest at two and a half minutes due to their detective elements (asking the Villagers what happened/about the Facility, and searching for the Vials in the Facility itself).

The Cell and Escape sections are the fastest-paced, with the Village being the slowest. The player is expected to interact with the Villagers.

2.2 Narrative

2.2.1 Level Start- The Dockside

The level starts with the player arriving on the Island via a boat as a policeman, immediately the player notices the unusual mist and coolness of the night- the player exits the boat and walks up the (small) dock, where they suddenly encounter the Village (*the mist is thick enough for the player to not notice the Village until they are in it*). When they are in the village the mist slightly clears and light can be seen emitting from street-side oil lamps- although the residents have access to electricity, they strangely do not make use of it. The houses and other buildings look ancient and certainly aren't up to modern standards.

2.2.2 The Village

As the player walks through the Village, they encounter the Villagers. They look a little weird, wearing old patchwork clothing and their skin being greasy. Still, they're useful as the player approaches them and asks them for information. They tell the player (reluctantly) that they heard a loud screeching noise a few days ago coming from the Facility, and then the entire building went dark and has been ever since. "What's the Facility?" the player asks. Nobody will tell them, except that it's "the big building at the end of the street". As the player walks through the Village's high street, they notice a lot of red graffiti (blood) on the buildings referencing a "being of light" that can "shake the earth". Intrigued (and slightly apprehensive), the player starts walking towards the Facility.

2.2.3 The Facility

Immediately upon the end of the high street the player comes across a high barbed-wire fence. On it hangs a sign: "TRESPASSERS WILL BE SHOT. THIS FENCE IS ELECTRIFIED." The meaning is clear; they don't want people waltzing into this place. The player sees a large rip in the fence, large enough for them to slip through (*touching this fence means death and failing the level- this is the first of the obstacles the player must face to gain access*). The player walks across a field, watching for small flashing lights that mean buried sensors (*if the player touches one of these, the alarm goes off and fails the level*). They reach the front entrance, with its doors hanging off their hinges but otherwise all seems calm. The mist seems to have dissipated.

The player starts walking inside, and stops. They see a hallway containing a single dangerous-looking doorway with a laser moving up and down (*a device to help contain the Entity*)- the player must cross this doorway without being killed by this moving laser. Once across, the player can access a

It should be noted that this containment system is destroyed by the Entity upon the final escape sequence of this level, enabling escape.

security console and deactivate the security system (*big red button for comic relief?*). The only thing that cannot be turned off is the containment system, trapping the player inside the Facility.

The player then navigates around the Facility's rooms to look for clues. Along the way, they find vials containing some weird fluid of various colours, a syringe, and a handy instruction booklet detailing what each of these vials are for (*mixed together, they create a highly-experimental compound that gives the user something similar to superpowers*). In an uncontrollable urge, the player mixes these vials together and injects them. They wonder why they did so because *they* definitely did not want to inject an unknown substance! They now move with a newfound agility, and are faster than before.

The player now remembers they saw a thick-looking steel door covered with rubble near the entrance, they use their newfound powers to punch through it and find themselves inside a cave system.

2.2.4 The Caves

The player feels a draught from somewhere deep inside the cave system. There is very little light here as they walk deeper into the cave, so the player takes out their torch and lights it (*they're a policeman, they'll have a torch*). They see piles of dead bodies, some of them are wearing similar clothing to the Villagers and the others are wearing the uniform of the Facility- are these the missing Villagers the player originally came to investigate? They're wearing expressions of pure horror, they clearly didn't die of natural causes! All of them have significant gashes to their chest and neck area, as well as some bodies being decapitated entirely. The player can see a seemingly solid box-like structure that manages to be both matte and shiny, on it there is a plaque with a single word ("DANGER") and three thin slots that look like they might fit cards of some kind (*the camera gives focus to these, to indicate that the player must find these cards*).

The player then works their way around the cave system (*purposely made small due to barricades*) to find the four access cards required to activate the portal, the cards are in the pockets of three of the dead Facility workers.

Once they have all three, the player then proceeds back to the portal and a cut-scene is invoked where the player's character inserts the cards into the side of the portal, the portal is activated and they walk through.

2.2.5 The Cell

The player emerges from another portal inside a strange space: it is entirely bare with nothing in it. There appears to be pockets of gravity and there is no sound at all (even the player's own footsteps), allowing the player to walk on walls- which way is up and which way is down? The environment is lit but the light sources cannot be seen. The player is allowed to play about in this environment for five seconds after their first movement, and then the Entity appears.

The creature stands (*or is it sitting? It is impossible to tell*) silently staring at the player, no expression can be seen on its face but somehow the player can understand that it is extremely angry about being awoken (*the player starts to hear a high-pitched wind-like sound and the lighting in the Cell start to flicker*).

2.2.5 The Escape (Final Act)

The Cell starts shaking, slowly increasing in intensity. The Entity continues to stare at the player and the portal starts glowing red and fading in and out, indicating to the player that they should leave the Cell. Now.

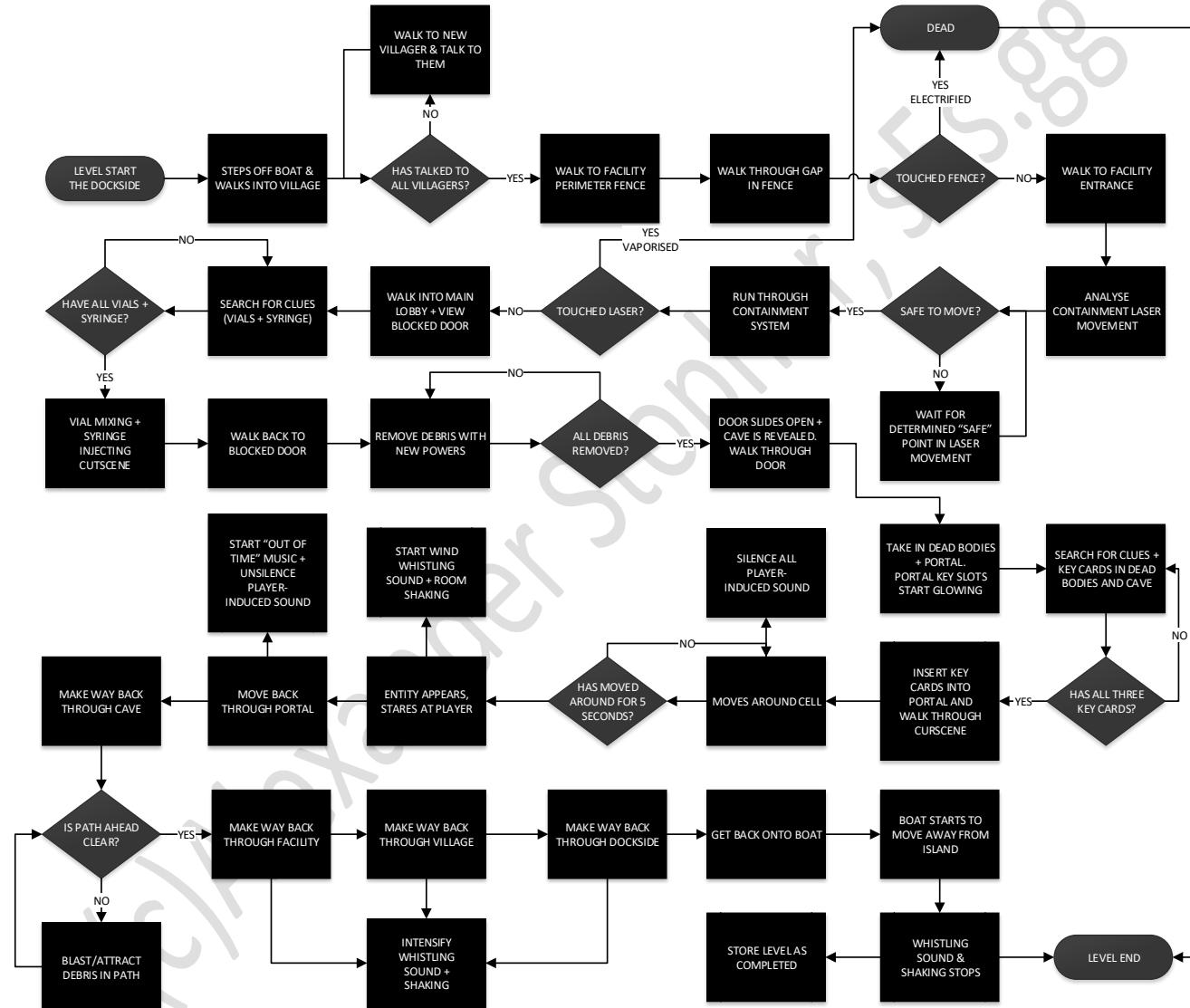
Once back through the portal, it is apparent that the shaking is occurring throughout the Island, and its intensity is still increasing. Dust begins to fall en-masse from the cave walls and ceiling, behind them the cave starts collapsing and the player then starts to hear the same loud windy whistling noise they heard in the Cell. The Entity is coming. The path in front of the player collapses, they must use their powers to clear their path.

The player (*prompted by a “make your way back to the boat” message on the HUD*) then makes their way out of the Cave, which by the time they leave has almost entirely collapsed behind them (*note: events should be set so that components of the Cave collapse when the player reaches certain points*). As they make their way back through the Facility and the Village the environment collapses around them. The remaining Villagers are nowhere to be seen and cannot be helped, the strange mist has now disappeared but all the oil torches in the Village are no longer lit.

As they make it to the boat, the loud windy whistling noise reaches a crescendo and suddenly falls silent, except the sea water splashing on the side of the boat and the engine of the boat itself.

The level has ended.

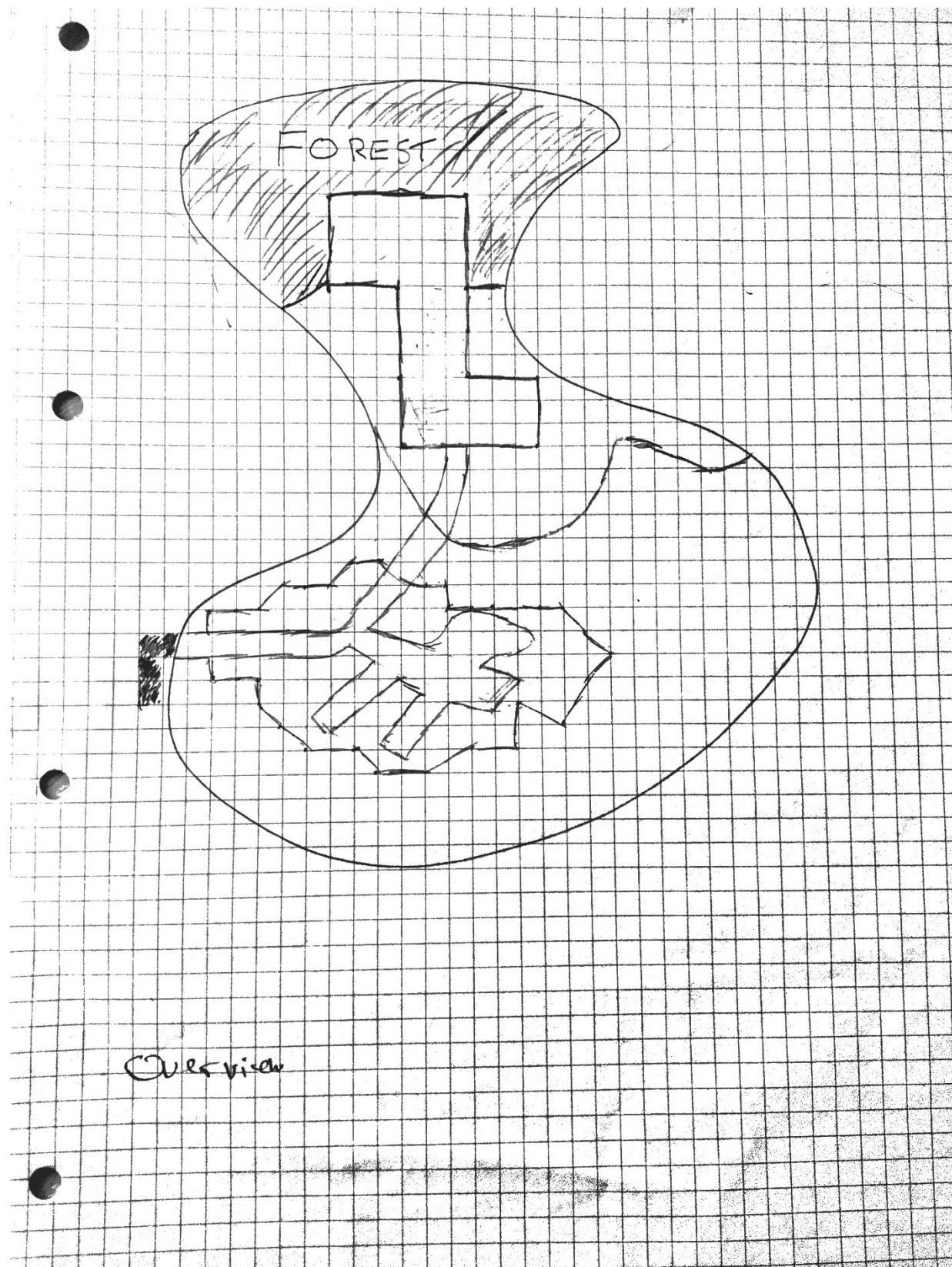
2.3 Level Flow



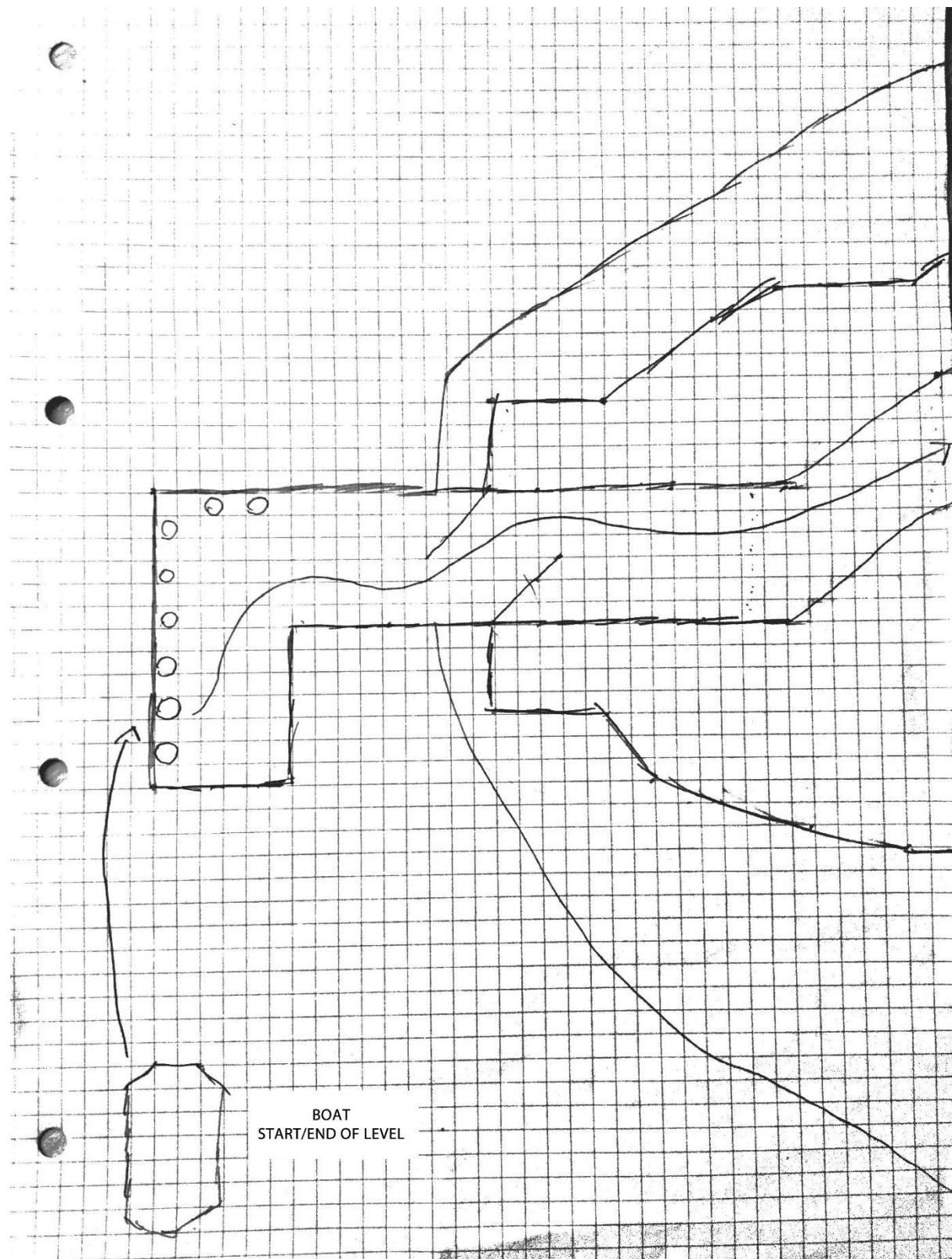
3 Sketches

3.1 Maps

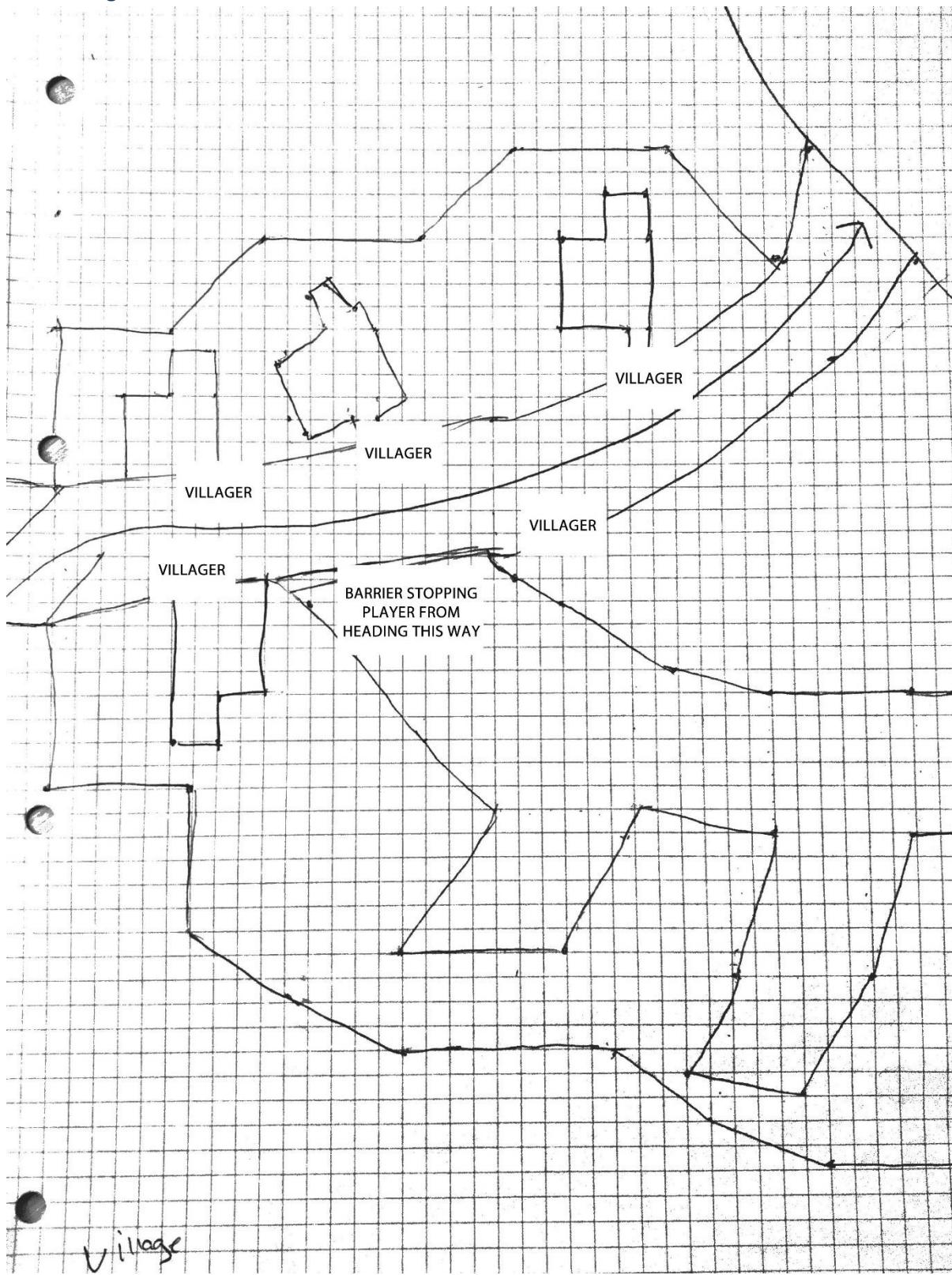
3.1.1 Overview



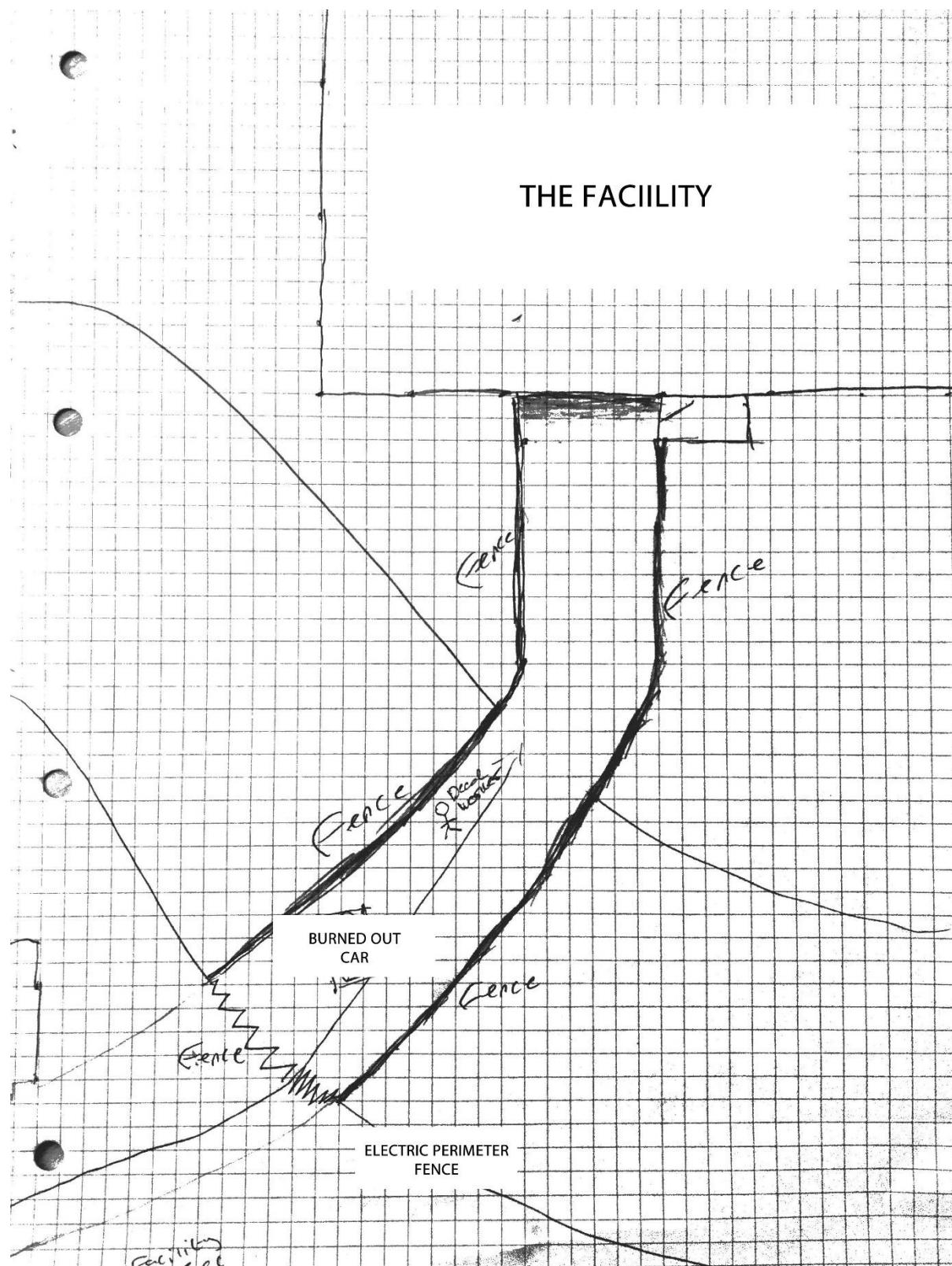
3.1.2 Dockside



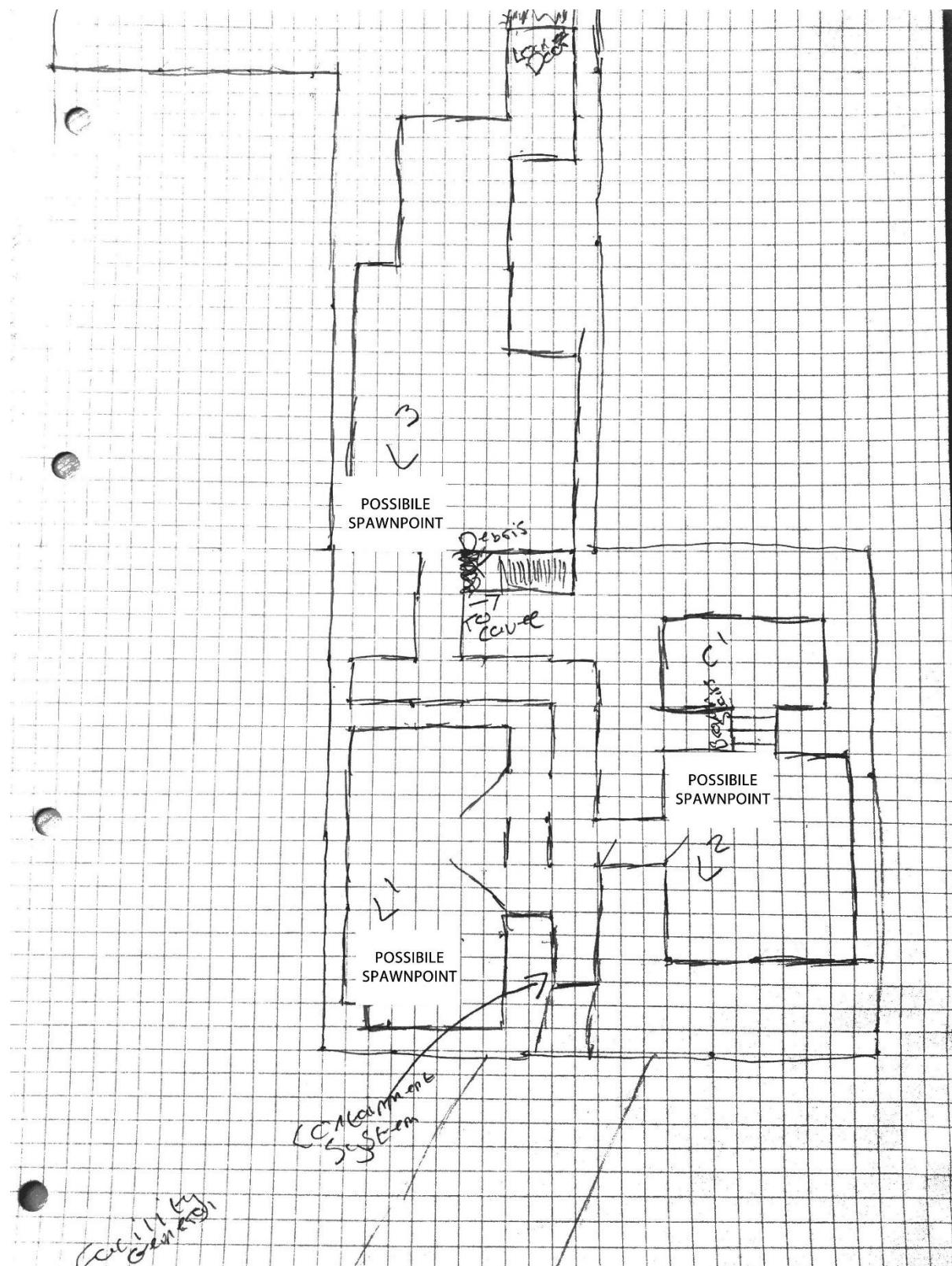
3.1.3 Village



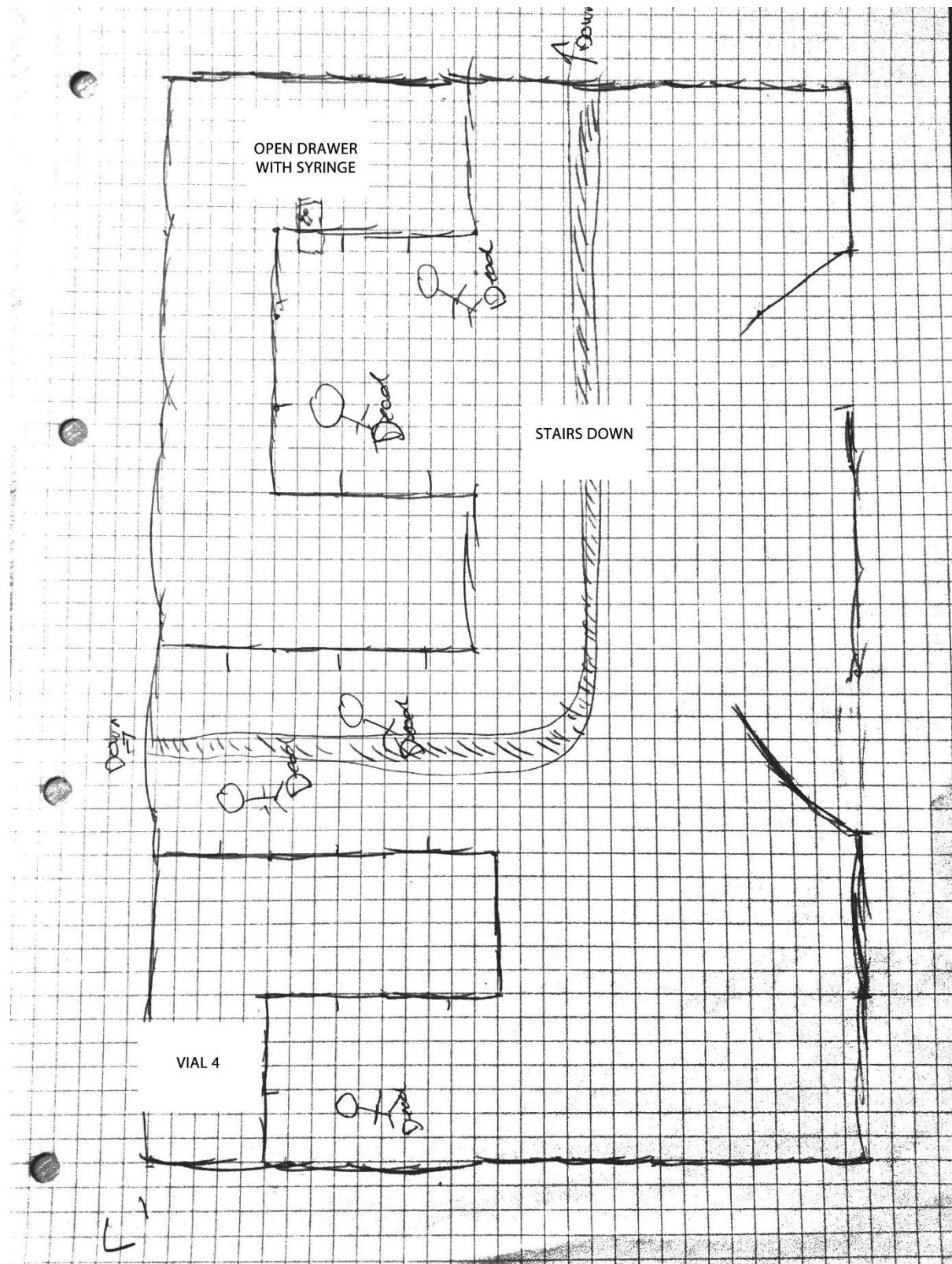
3.1.4 Facility (Perimeter Defences)



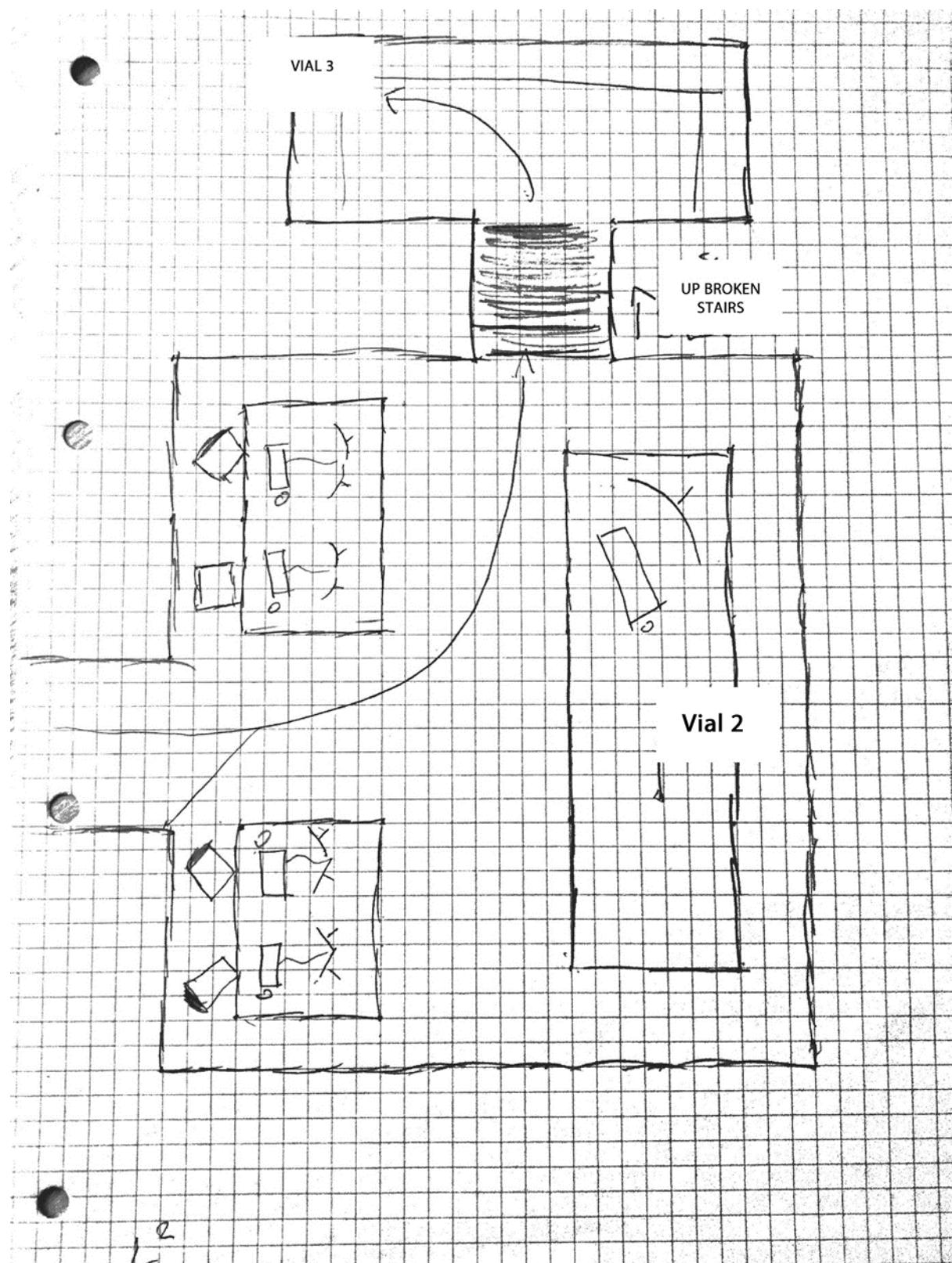
3.1.5 Facility (Overview)



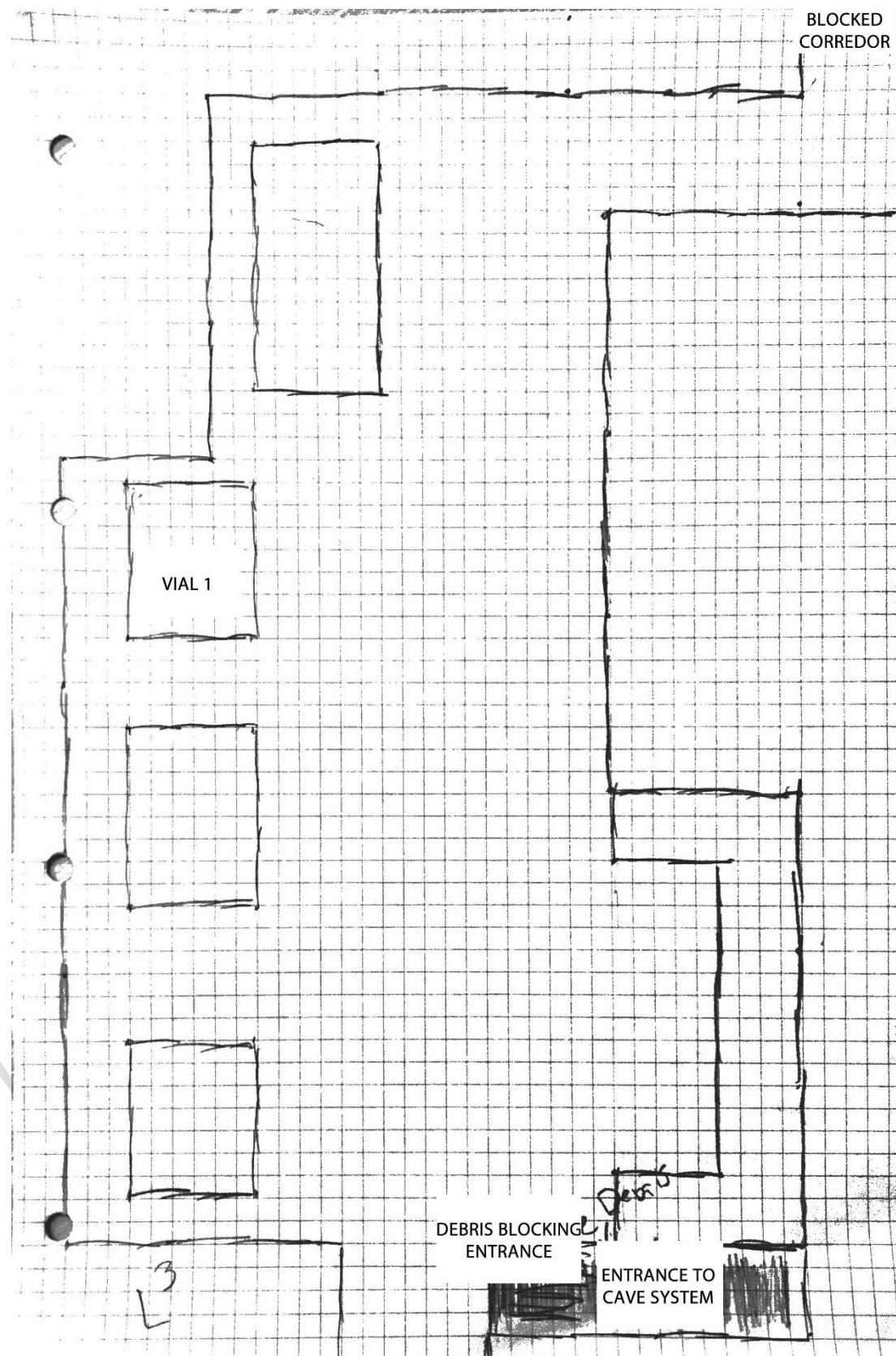
3.1.6 Facility (Room 1)



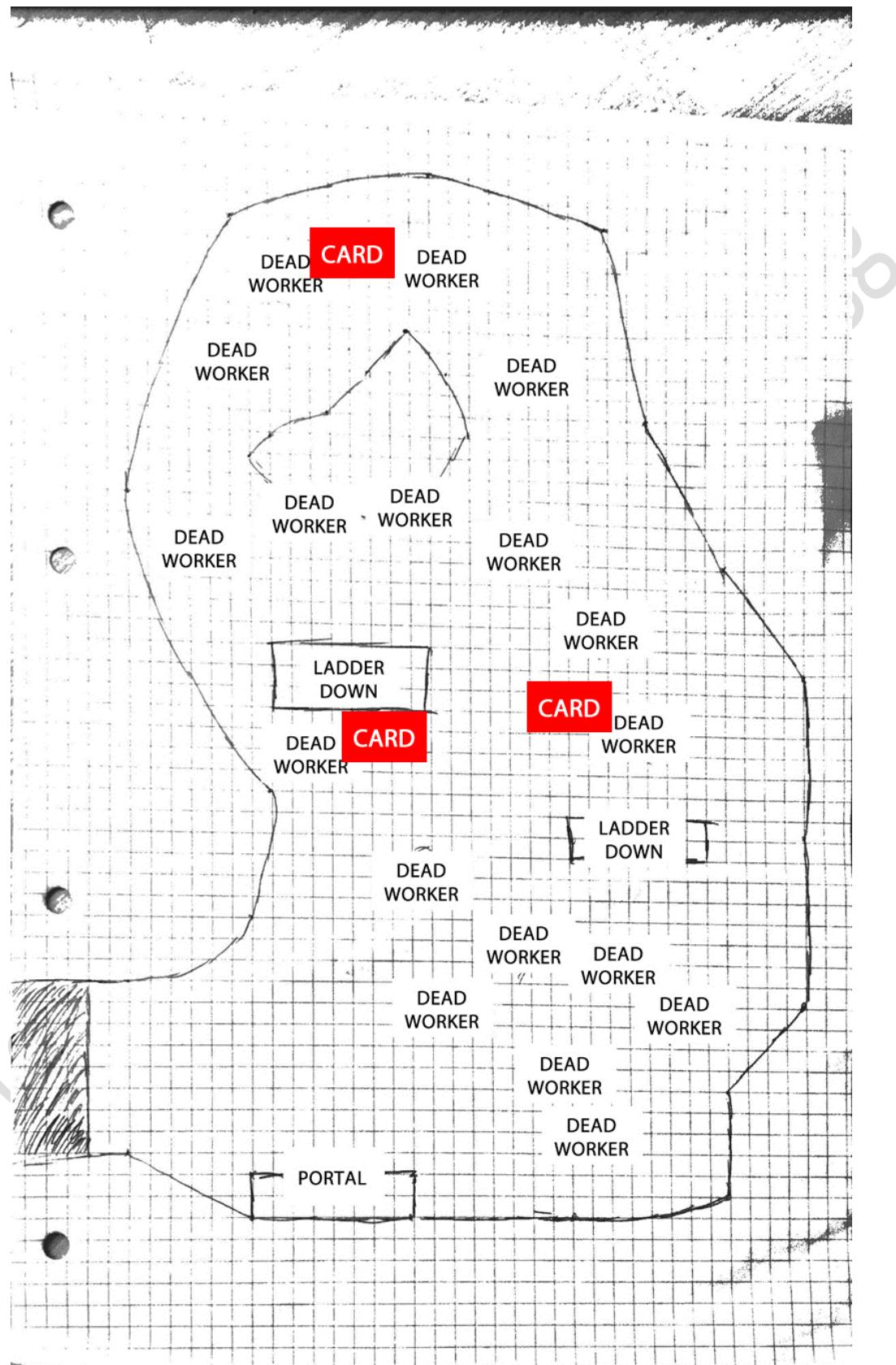
3.1.7 Facility (Room 2 & Closet 1)



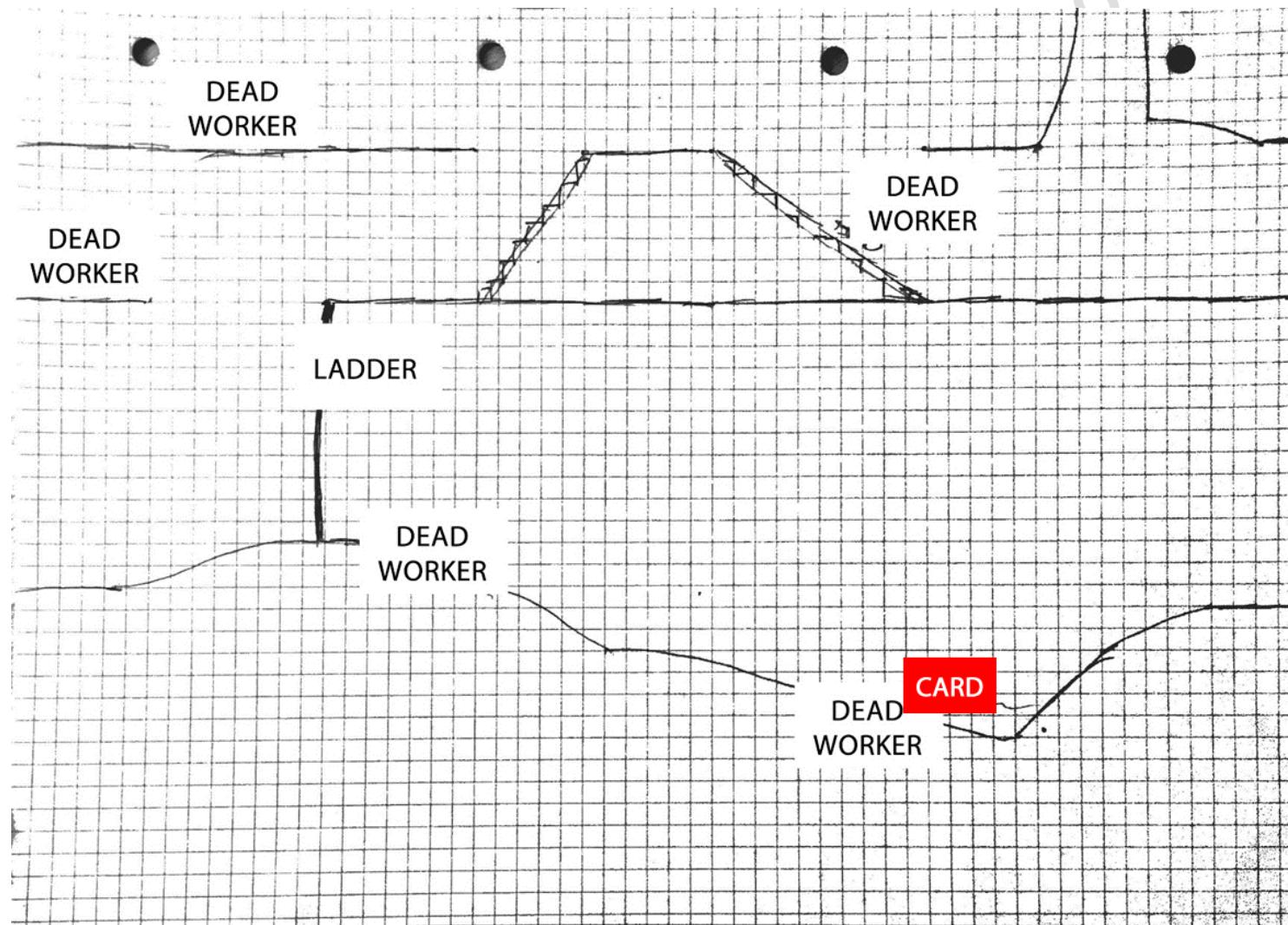
3.1.8 Facility (Room 3)



3.1.9 Cave



3.1.10 Cave (Platform Sketch)



4 Sound

	Description	Location	Activation & Deactivation
Sea	Sea water lapping on side of boat.	Boat/Dockside	On start of level, fade on exit from Dockside.
Boat Engine	Engine of boat, preferably with the engine stopping.	Boat	On start of level, ends when boat stops.
Footsteps	Player's footsteps. Footsteps echo when in Facility.	All apart from the Cell	On move, apart from in the Cell.
Equipment/Clothing Rustling	When player jumps, their equipment/clothing (i.e. stab vest) should rustle/move against them.	All apart from the cell.	When player touches the ground from a jump.
Seagulls	Seagulls squawking.	Dockside	To match Sea.
Fire	Soft roar of fire of oil lanterns burning (no crackling as that comes from wood burning and no wood is burning here).	Village	Near oil lanterns in village.
Static Sound	Quiet sound of static, hardly distinguishable from background sound.	All apart from the Cell.	On start of level, only deactivates while in the cell (reactivates on exit)
Infrasound	The so-called "fear" frequency, 19Hz, can induce fear and anxiety.	The Facility, and all locations thereafter.	On entering the Facility, does not deactivate.
Whistle	Shrill whistle, starts off quiet but becomes louder over time. Must be at least two minutes long.	The Cell, and all locations thereafter.	On appearance of the Entity, does not deactivate.
Creaking Wood	Wood creaking as player jumps down/walks on the broken stairs from Room 2 to Closet. At least five different types of creaking to randomise.	Stairs between Facility room 2 and Closet.	On walk.
Electric Buzz	Buzzing of the electric fence & containment laser, signifies to the player that those systems are active. Electric fence buzz is quiet while the buzz of the containment laser is much louder.	Facility perimeter defence.	Near <i>active</i> electric fence & containment laser.

"Agghh!"	Player makes this sound when stabbed with the syringe/electrocuted via the electric fence.	Anywhere apart from the Cell.	On syringe use or electrocution via electric fence.
Debris Falling	Various types of debris falling onto the ground (as one file, and individual).	Anywhere apart from the Cell.	On Cave/building collapse, on moving debris out of the way via powers.
Escape Music	Music on escape.	Anywhere apart from the Cell.	On exit from portal after being in Cell <i>and</i> the Entity being awoken.

5 Emotion

The principle emotion of this level is fear, as well as confusion and disorientation. The application of all below elements is critical for the objective (to induce emotion) to be realised:

5.1 Infrasound

Infrasound is used as it is a common tool in horror films to induce fear and feelings of being uncomfortable, in this level it is played constantly after the player enters the Facility.

The precise requirements are as follows:

- 19Hz
- Sine wave (*not square as a 19Hz square wave is audible, if created properly this sound is not audible*)
- At least a 10-minute duration (to allow for player dawdling)

Within the Cell the only audio that can be played is the infrasound audio track and the Entity's "whistle".

5.2 Modified Physics

Within the Cell the player can walk on all six walls of the Cell, and when changing walls the camera changes to suit (so that the player is always "upright"). The intended effect is that the player should not be able to tell the difference between the walls, ceiling, and floor, so that they become disoriented.

5.3 "Just in Time" (JIT) Events

These events are triggered:

- When walking through the containment laser system *into* the Facility, a whole-doorway laser system should be activated just after the player walks through it.
- When the Island is being destroyed and the player arrives back into the cave system from the portal, the cave in front of them should partially collapse (they must use their powers to clear the blockage to get through).