

Level Design

Blocking

Intent

Game : Metroid prime 2.

Universss : Futuristic

Basis : Sanctuary's fortress. A heavily mechanised/technological area. This is about 60% into the game, with the player already owning most of the equipment. The enemies and sequences are harder at this point.

Legend for the pictures :

Metroid prime is a game with a lot of éléments, which makes the drawings and blocking hard to read. So, here is the legend, while the one for the blocking can be found in the blocking explanation docutment.

-Grey shades = height. The darker the grey, the higher the floor is. Except for pure black, which is for bottomless pits.

-Blue lines = normal doors. Black/Grey lines = dark/light beam door. Red line = missile door. Yellow line = power bomb door. Green line = Super missile door. Pink line = Annihilation beam door (which the player won't have)

-C = Morph ball canon.

-M = Map terminal

-S = Save point

-P = Dimensional portal (switch between worlds)

-Maroon dot = Grappling hook point.

-Maroon line = Bomb switch.

-Orange line = Spider ball rails.

-Pinkish red line = Unpenetrable forcefield.

-Lighter maroon blot = Destructible wall.

-Pink blot = Activable platform (going up and down)

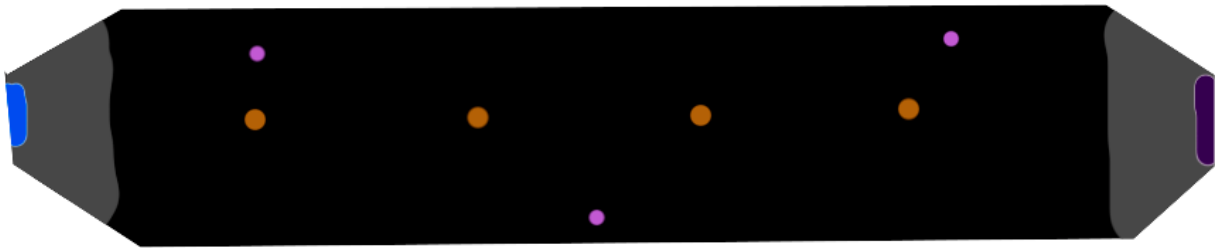
-Red dot = Starting point for the player.

enemy, then the same one but with other ones around it. In the definitive version, there is one, then two of them, and only then the new type.

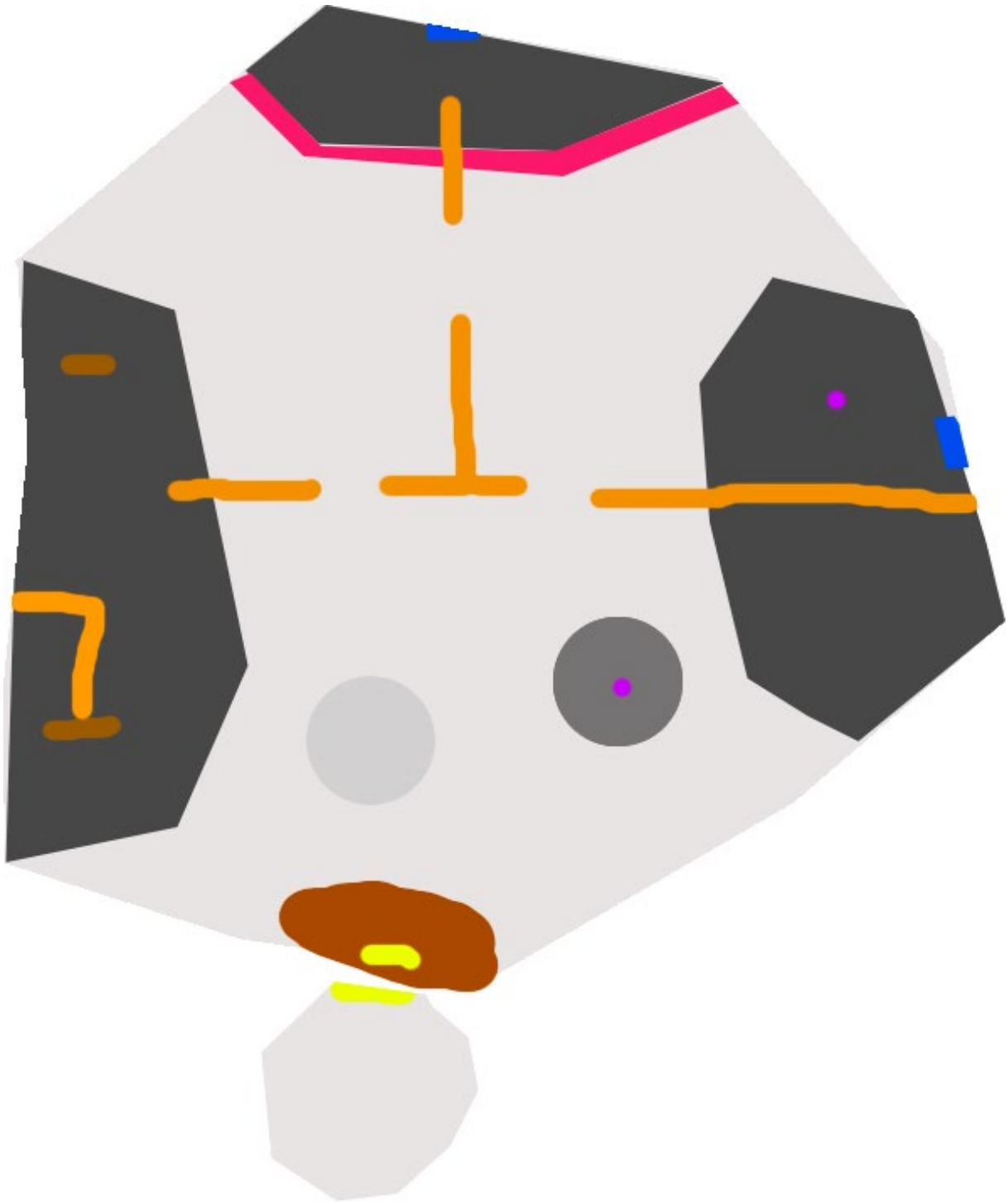
The room has transparent walls, allowing the player to apprehend what'll happen next before going in. Then they have a way to easily look at the external structure, once they reach the center.

The map terminal on the right is a nice short term objective, due to seeming hard to reach, and thus baiting the player toward it. The reward would be the area's map, which means knowing the general form of the room and the structure, which is nice for exploring but not needed, hence the fact that it's a bit left of from the room.

Finally, the north door is impossible to open for now, emphasizing that there will be a shortcut and a need to visit the area again later.



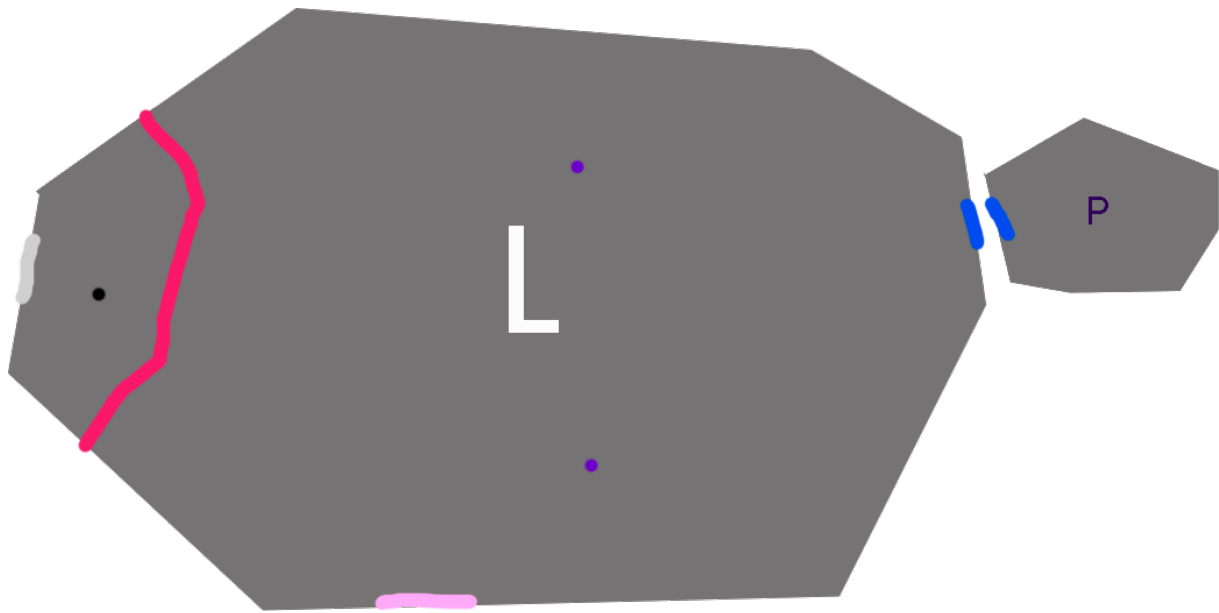
The second room is based around a simple principle : The grappling hook. The room is made of a large pit, above which the player will have to swing between the hook points. Having some enemies in it adds a bit of danger and action to this transition hall.



As for the third room, I wanted to make a small puzzle/gauntlet.

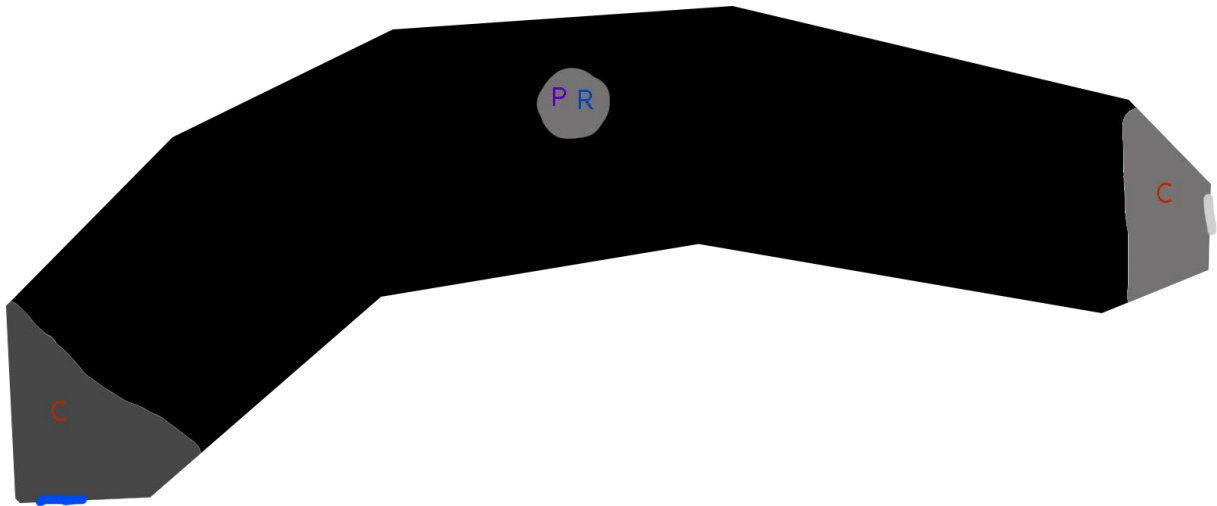
For this, I chose the spider ball, and a switch to deactivate in order to progress. Enemies were added next, for a classical ambush.

In the south part of the room is a breakable wall with a small reward room, containing an upgrade, as usual for the game.



The final big room wasn't completely drawn. The basic idea was to use it as a way to make a loop with the starting hub, using the south door (which is still unopenable). Given that it was the « end » of the line, the main dimensional portal of the area was put there.

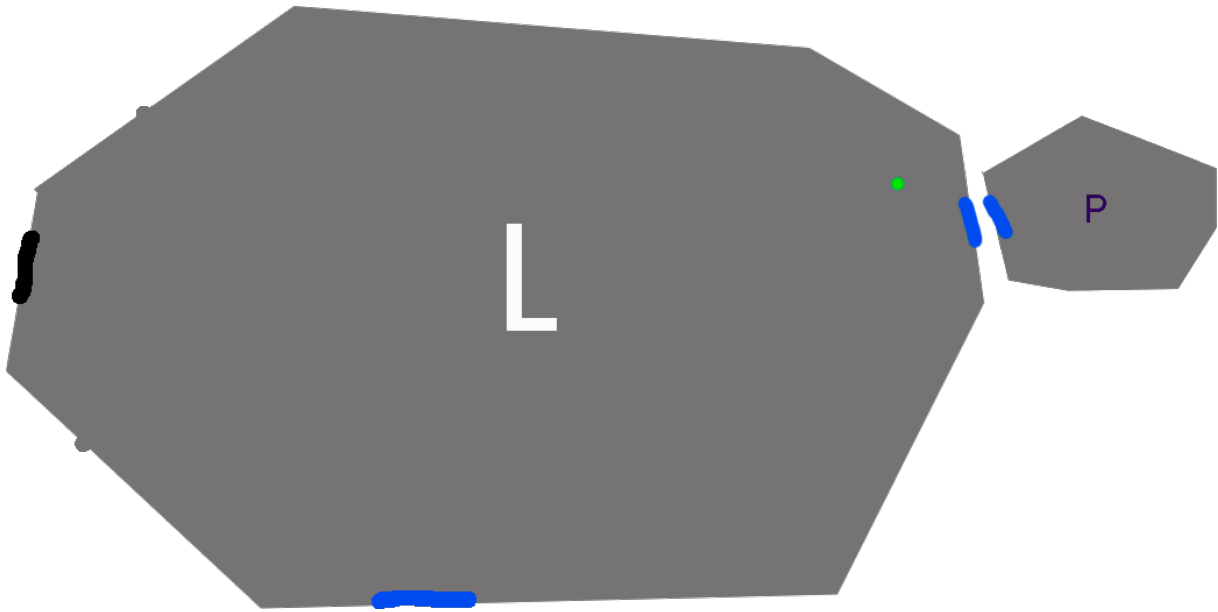
The plan is to get stuck in the entrance, while being able to see the rest of the room through a forcefield. From there, you can see some inactive enemies, hinting that there will be a fight here. To get to the next part, you have to navigate through a small maze, using the morph ball, under the floor. However, the maze wasn't drawn (only being represented by the L here), and was made in a more organic way, during the blocking itself.



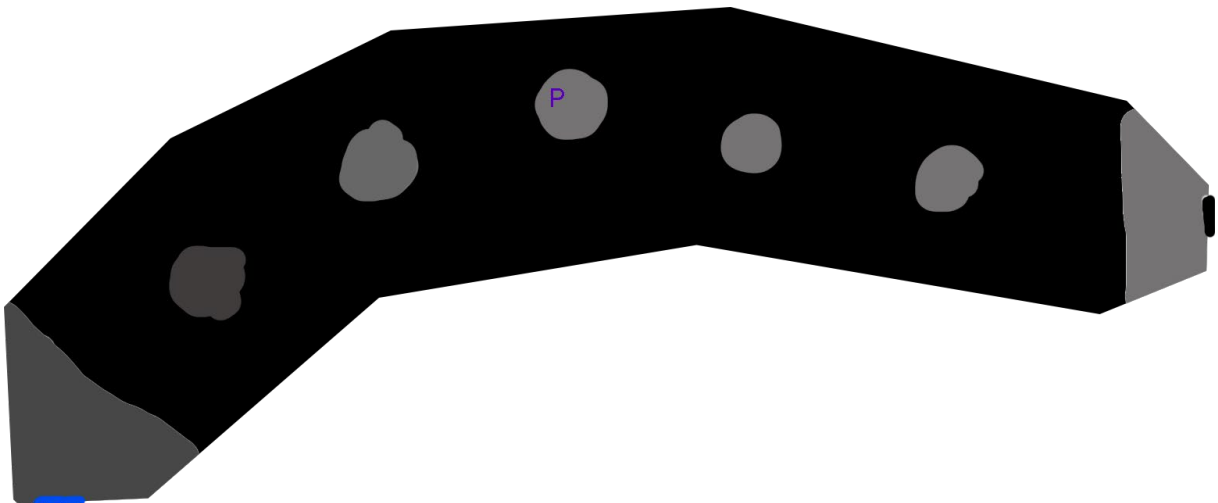
As a way to complete the loop, this transition room was added between the puzzle and the maze. It's made to be really simple : A two-way canon, letting the player go from one end to the other. The large gap would then be used for the alternate world.

In the center of the pit is a simple platform, holding a portal and an energy tank, hinting that you'll have to come back in the dark world, in order to get this reward.

Once these five room though, drawn, and blocked, the question of the dark world presented itself. Here the rooms have to be navigated again, but in a different order.

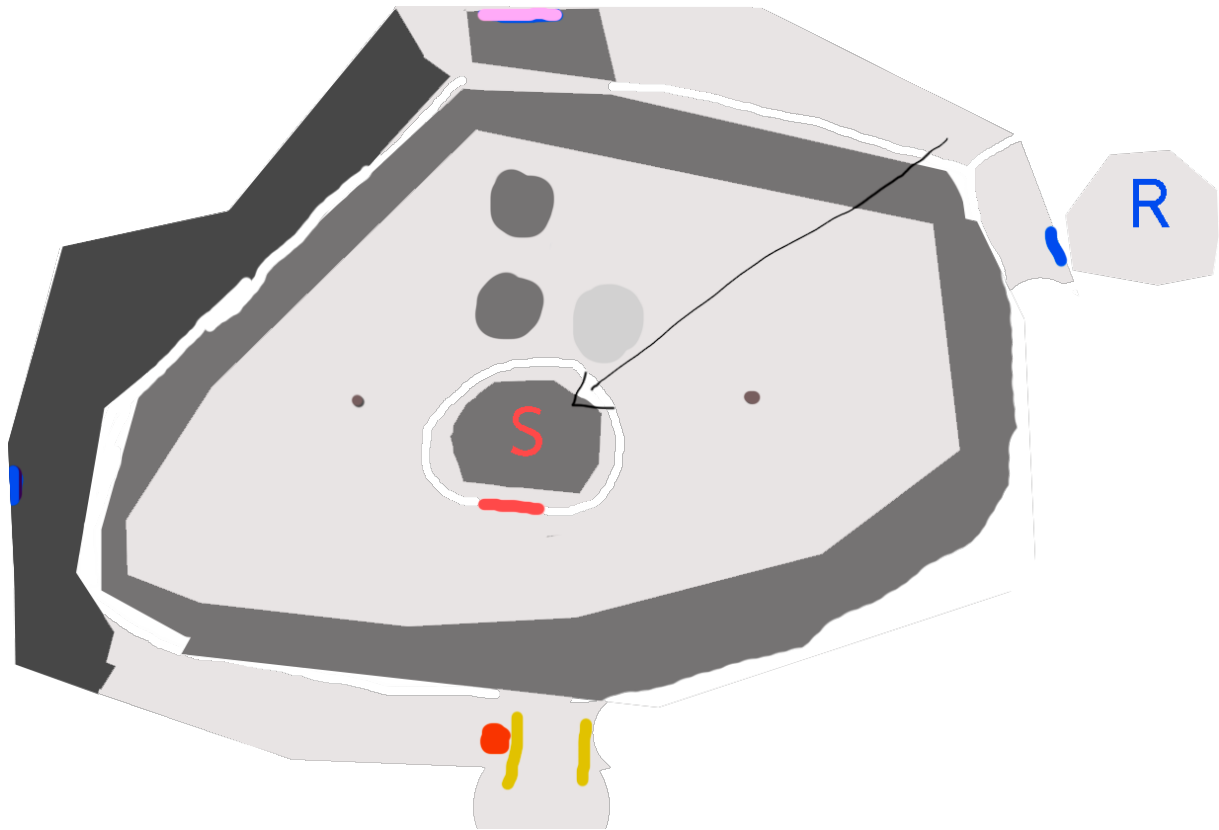


First, the maze. Due to being the first room after the switching, it was the first one made in dark mode. I started by putting the Golem enemy, which is way more dangerous than anything met until then, as a way to underline the world switch and the increasing difficulty. In the same logic, the player has to complete the same maze, but this time it's on the ceiling, using the spider ball. This simple switch helps with the "same but different" aspect of the dark world, along with being a bit harder due to the switched perspective. Again, the maze is only in the 3D version.



Then came the transition room. It's used as a way to stop the player, after baiting them with the promise of the energy tank. Here, each platform is too far away to be reached with the double jump, and there is no grappling point to be seen. This also serves as foreshadowing for

the next upgrade that'll be available, creating a want and a wait.



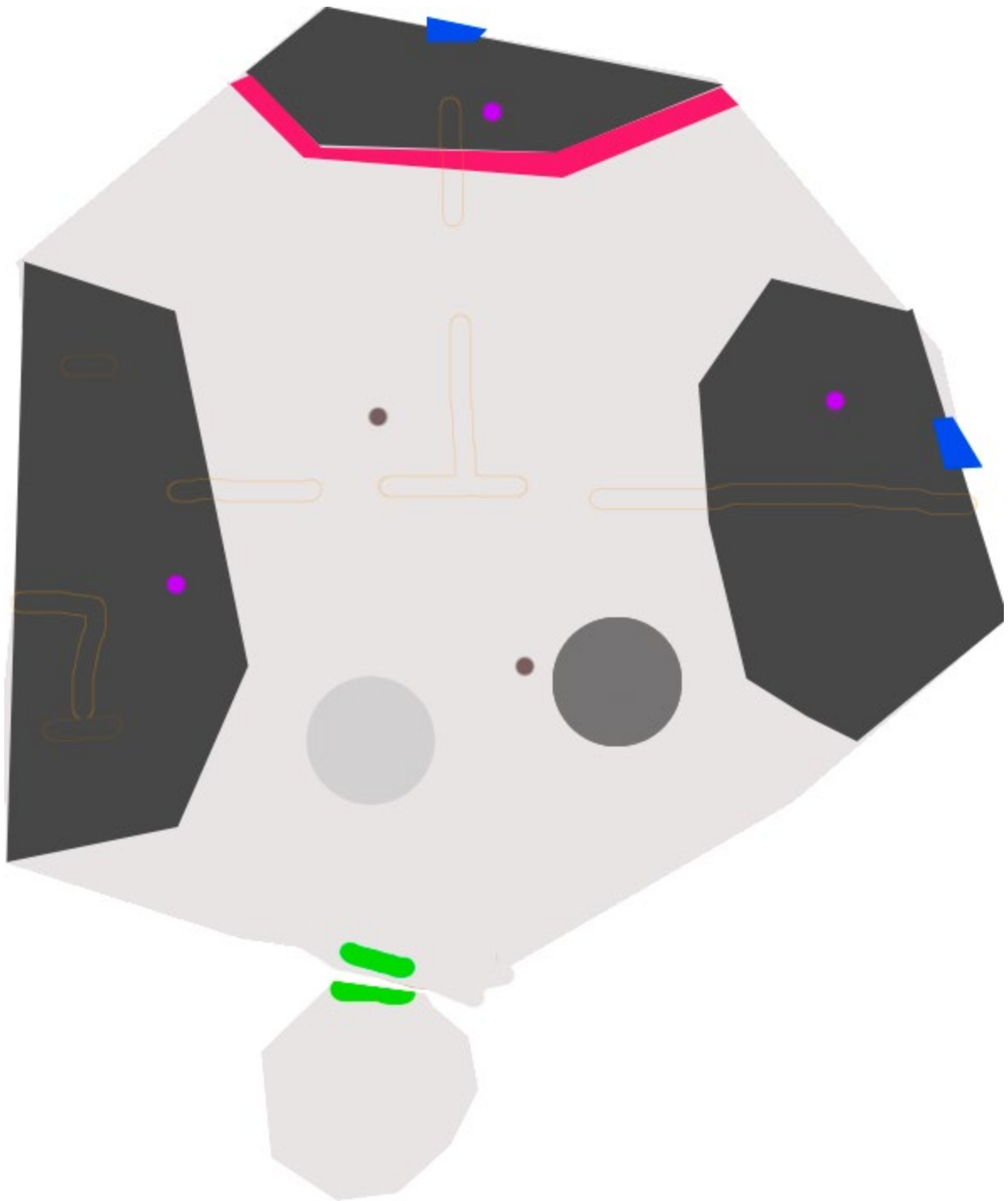
Since the west room is blocked, the player has to go south, toward the Hub.

This room was a bit problematic for the dark world, due to its structure. A large part of the room happened to be useless, even if the player goes down to get the second save point. This was compensated by adding an item in the south part, along with another foreshadowing : You can't reach it but there are two parallel walls leading to it. The enemies were put on the floor level in order to be a problem only if you want the item. Finally, there is a reload room (gives back all ammo) on the right side of the hub, in order to let the player freshen up, along with the save/heal point.



For this pit room, there was a need to change a bit of the mechanics. As such, I preferred using a mobile platforms system. Each one of them can be moved up by shooting with the right beam, allowing an easy jump to the next one.

Due to being way easier than the grappling variant, two problematic enemies were added, as a way to make it more active, since the hub was already a quiet place.



Finally the puzzle room became an arena.

Here, the player will have to fight two hard waves of enemies in a row, as a way of contrasting with the light world version. There is also a nice reward, in the form of the Screw Attack. This move allows to travel longer horizontal distance in the air, and wall jump in certain places. This means getting access to the shortcut toward the portal, and to the two items that the player saw earlier (the health tank and the one in the hub).