Level Design Doc: Main Character's Apartment/ Quest 0

<Eternal Souls>
Version 1.0

Designer: Josh Coldiron

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Quick Summary

- *BrainGenix (BG) is a multi-departmental effort that aims to develop software for Whole Brain Emulation (WBE), which involves replicating all the important functions of a biological brain by simulating its internal dynamics with a high level of detail. The purpose of this game project is to support research in brain emulation and eventually allow interaction with brain emulations.*
- *The setting is an imaginary city modeled after Paris, France. The starting location is inside of the main character's apartment. The second location is the nearby city streets that leads the player at the grocery store where they encounter the final segment of this stage in an alley.*
- *The period is set in the near distant future. Technology would still have remnant of our current period (the 2020s) with slightly more futuristic tech integrated into the environment. Parts of the city have been developed with public transit and the pedestrian in mind rather than around the automobile. The buildings will have some greenery. The world is largely at peace however there are some that resist social evolutionary progress and are organizing against those they think are a threat to their world. The time duration of this even is real time.*
- *The game play is to introduce story elements and exploration of the world. Basic navigation and a base level of mechanics is introduced. The player can interact with prompts in their apartment which will allow them to perform tasks or view information. The player will also be introduced to basic functions of devices they have like phones and computers. The next section will involve navigating to the grocery store where the player will be able to interact with NPC characters as well as some interactive prompts. The final section involves the player getting to the grocery store but having to flee for their life.*

Goals

1. *Introduce basic movement controls: Walk, Look.*
2. *Introduce basic item/task interaction controls: Prompt interactions based on narrative.*
3. *Introduce communication controls and dialogue trees.*
4. *Introduce Phone/ Device controls.*
5. *Show the main characters interest in trains as well as any other details through environmental story telling.*
6. *Provide player reasoning for the purpose of the main character leaving their apartment to go to the grocery store.*
7. *Allow the player to view parts of the local city but gently direct them to the grocery store.*
8. *Introduce running and jumping mechanics when player encounters the brawl near the grocery store.*
9. *Introducing their hacking mechanic to escape.*
10. *Introduce motive for player to have interest in brain emulation.*

Gameplay Overview

The intro quest is to show the player the basic controls as well as introduce the player to the character and settings. It is broken into three parts. The first portion allows the player to explore their apartment, then travel to the grocery store. In the process of getting groceries the player must escape a deadly street brawl which will be used to introduce more action and hacking mechanics.

The player has unlimited time to explore their apartment. Their primary challenge is to learn from their environment through interaction prompts. They will have the ability to interact with their computer and phone through their respective mechanics. They will also be able to have a conversation with their roommate to expand the story.

The next section the player will navigate out of the apartment (after) being notified to go to the grocery store. There is no time constrains for this section. They can explore this portion of the city, train spot and converse with NPCs. Their device will help them navigate to the grocery store. Gentle guidance will prevent them from going out of the bounds of the area.

After arriving at the grocery store, the player will have to flee. This will introduce running and jumping mechanics as well as hacking mechanics. Once the fight begins the player will need to escape as quickly as possible but there will be no penalty for time as long as they can avoid attackers. The level will be completed once the character is cornered into an alley and will have to use their hacking skills to get into a back door of another business.
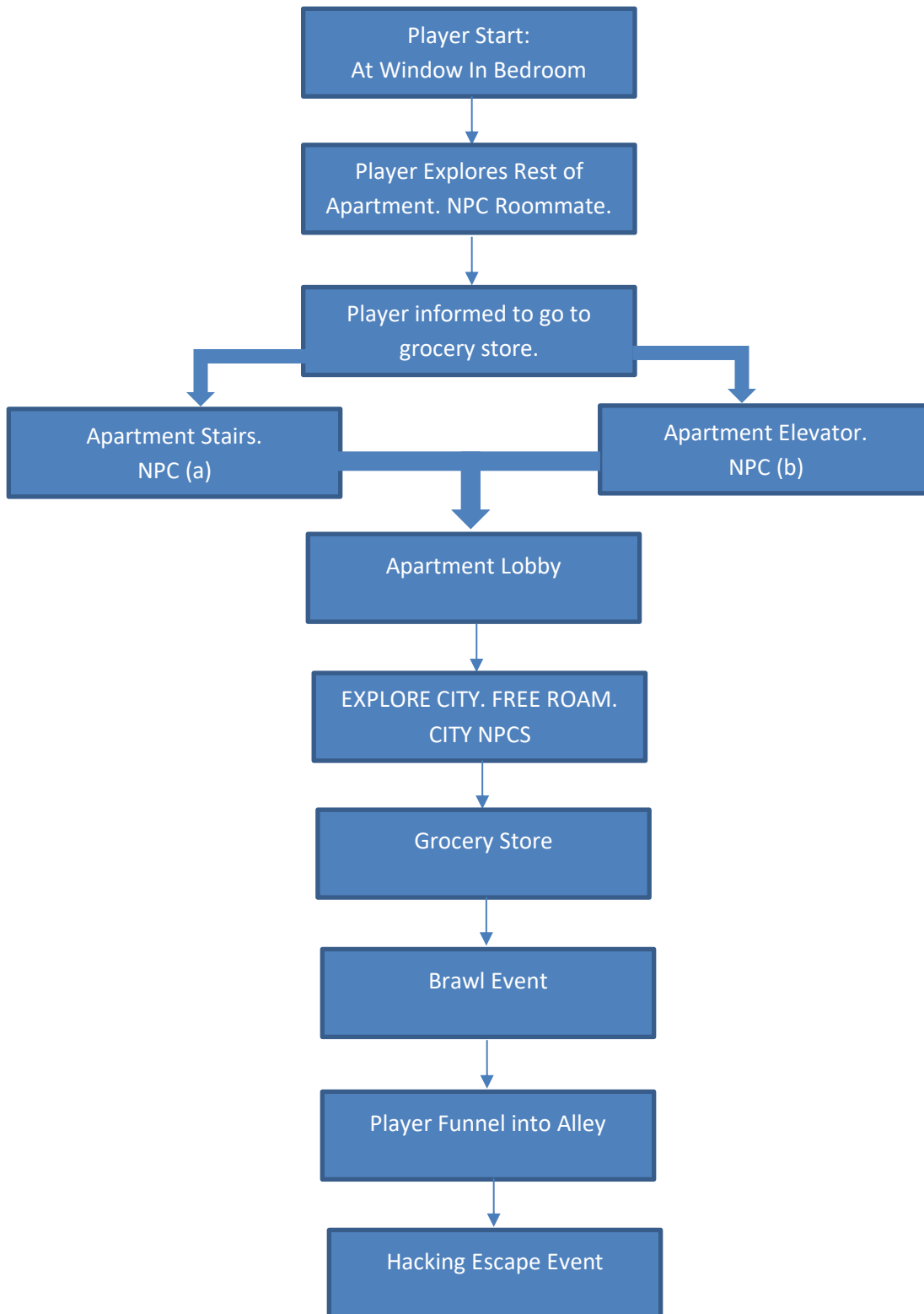
General Game Flow

The player will start the level sitting at their computer and be introduced looking out the window at the train yard. They will then get up to explore their apartment. They can interact with the following in their room: Computer, closet, bedroom door, or prompts at window to spot trains. When the player exits their bedroom, they can interact with other parts of their apartment through prompts. They can also have a conversation with their roommate. There is no direction given to the player at this time and they are allowed to explore which will help fill in parts of the story as well as inform the player about the MC.

Once the player has finished a conversation with their roommate, they will be informed that they need to go to the grocery store. They are free to wander the surrounding block of the city, but various elements will block them from leaving the area and their phone will navigate them to their destination. They can interact with other NPCs and explore the general area.

Once they have reached the grocery store the event is triggered where they need to flee the area. They will be funneled into an alley where they hack a back door to escape the incident.

The flow of the levels goes between open flow to linear. The stage will have segments that allow the player to explore at their pace and others that will be linear and guide them to the set conclusion.

Level Flow Chart. See map (pg15)

```
                    ┌─────────────────────────┐
                    │    Player Start:        │
                    │ At Window In Bedroom    │
                    └─────────────────────────┘
                                │
                                ▼
                    ┌─────────────────────────┐
                    │  Player Explores Rest of │
                    │ Apartment. NPC Roommate. │
                    └─────────────────────────┘
                                │
                                ▼
                    ┌─────────────────────────┐
                    │  Player informed to go to│
                    │     grocery store.       │
                    └─────────────────────────┘
                       │                    │
                       ▼                    ▼
          ┌──────────────────┐      ┌──────────────────┐
          │ Apartment Stairs.│      │ Apartment Elevator.│
          │    NPC (a)       │──────│     NPC (b)       │
          └──────────────────┘      └──────────────────┘
                                │
                                ▼
                    ┌─────────────────────────┐
                    │    Apartment Lobby       │
                    └─────────────────────────┘
                                │
                                ▼
                    ┌─────────────────────────┐
                    │ EXPLORE CITY. FREE ROAM. │
                    │      CITY NPCS           │
                    └─────────────────────────┘
                                │
                                ▼
                    ┌─────────────────────────┐
                    │     Grocery Store        │
                    └─────────────────────────┘
                                │
                                ▼
                    ┌─────────────────────────┐
                    │     Brawl Event          │
                    └─────────────────────────┘
                                │
                                ▼
                    ┌─────────────────────────┐
                    │  Player Funnel into Alley│
                    └─────────────────────────┘
                                │
                                ▼
                    ┌─────────────────────────┐
                    │  Hacking Escape Event    │
                    └─────────────────────────┘
```

Major Elements

This should be a bulleted list that includes:

- *Exploring the city and unraveling the story of the game (The Hook)*
- *Escaping the deadly brawl (WoW moments)*
- *Establishing the MC's interest in having his brain emulated to live on (Story Beats)*
- *Basic movement, jumping, running, conversations, action prompts, hacking (New Gameplay)*
- *The adjacent train station outside the MC's apartment (Visual Elements)*

Objective Summary

Quest 0's objectives are:

- Explore environment to expand story
- Interact with NPCs to expand story
- Navigate to grocery store
- Flee attackers in brawl
- Hack door to escape level

The first half of the level is just for the player to learn more about the story through a combination of environment, talking with other characters and examining elements in their environment. The next portion involves the player trying to navigate to the store. During this portion, the player is safe from dangers and can explore at their own pace. At the grocery store, the player will encounter a brawl and must flee for their life. While it is an increase in challenge and intensity, the player is in little danger unless they fail to move. They will be funneled into an alley where they will have a timed hacking event which will result in death if they fail.

Technical Overview

Campaign

Two paragraphs or bullet points

1. *The player is a student in the city and has a roommate who is involved in a brain emulation project. We learn about the player's interest in trains, hacking and thoughts on mortality. The interactions will paint the world and setting. The player will encounter danger at the end of the level that will introduce primary mechanics as well as a purpose of them fearing death.*
2. *This is the beginning level of the game. It is to set up the story, intent and introduce basic mechanics to the player.*

Mission Location

A bullet list to help readers get the feel for the level. Give a short sentence description of the

- *Theme –The player is exploring the world to learn more about it and runs from danger at the end of it.*
- *Mood – The mood of the world is slightly cold to relate to death as well as the mechanic nature of computers.*
- *Setting – Begins in MC's apartment then continues their city block.*
- *Time of Day – Early in the day before many businesses open.*
- *Season – Colder season with many plants turned, yet no snow on the ground.*
- *Weather – no precipitation but gray skies.*

Mission Difficulty

Difficulty scale 1-10

- Starting – 1: There is no challenge at this portion of the game. The player is left to interact with what they choose.
- Middle – 2: The level is slightly more difficult because the player must navigate to a destination, but no other challenges are provided allowing the player to interact with what they choose.
- Ending – 3: The player must evade a brawl which will add new mechanics and a treat. It is challenging but not overly difficult. The final part of the ending will be just as difficult but have a timed challenge where they must hack a door to avoid being killed.

Mission Metrics

- *Play Time – 15-30 minutes*
- *MC's Apartment Physical Area*
    1. *Length: ~28m*
    2. *Width: ~24m*
    3. *Area: ~672m*
- *Apartment building Physical Area (per floor)*
    1. *Length: 112m*
    2. *Width: 84m*
    3. *Area: 9408m*
- *City Physical Area*
    1. *Length:*
    2. *Width:*
    3. *Area:*
- *Grocery building Physical Area*
    1. *Length:*
    2. *Width:*
    3. *Area:*
- *New Characters – Roommate, apartment NPCs, street brawlers, street NPCs.*
- *Visual Themes*
    1. *Medium sized apartment for college enrolled tenants*
    2. *Modern city adjacent to a train station*
    3. *Tech integrated components like doors that player will use mechanics to take advantage of for gameplay.*

Level Details

Level Atmosphere/Mood
The theme of the level is a modern city with progressive developments. The color scheme and environment will convey the feeling of cold though. As the intensity ramps up due to the altercation the theme will be a warmer intensity. Light can be given off by alarms and lights as well as fire. Textures will be clean but still have a lived-in look. Music will largely be in the background for most of the level but will change to an intense fast tempo song for the scene where the player must flee.

Major Characters/Vehicles
- *Player character*
- *MC Roommate*
- *Tenant in elevator who mentions the rising violence*
- *Old person on bench who explains the green plants in winter*
- *Group of rioters*
- *Train (Not accessible at this time)*

Gameplay Mechanics
- Prerequisite Skills –
  - *This level will introduce all the player mechanics. They will only need to know basic game interaction that is used typically for any player movement in other games.*
- Skills Learned –
  - *The player learns how to interact with action prompts*
  - *The player learns basic movement and looking*
  - *The player learns running and jumping to evade hazards*
  - *The player learns the hacking mechanic*
  - *The player learns conversational mechanics*
  - *The player learns how to use personal devices like their phone*

Story
- Intro
  - *Various pans of the city. One screen will have a text overlay of the date. Pans the MC's apartment exterior before showing the MC is working at his computer by the window and stops to look outside at the trains. He will comment on the scene before the player takes control.*
- In-Game
  - *Player will be beginning in their room and able to interact with various items that well help tell more about the character.*
  - *They leave into the main living area where they can explore the shared living space and elements to tell them more about the MC and roommate.*
  - *The player can knock on the roommate's door to start a conversation that will explore their relationship and setup later parts of the story.*
  - *The player will leave their apartment into the halls where they can take the elevators to another floor. Here they will interact with an NPC that will warn them of rising violence.*

- o *They will exit into the lobby of the apartment then out of the building.*
- o *Outside they can explore the city block and interact with other NPCs. One NPC will explain the green plants in winter. Other NPCs will flesh out the world as well.*
- o *The player can explore the area but is guided by their gps to the grocery store.*
- o *Once they arrived a riot will break out and people will start attacking bystanders.*
- o *The player will need to evade attacks but will be funneled into an alley.*
- o *In the alley the player will be hacking a back door of a business where they will flee the scene.*

- Extro
  - o *The MC is shaken up due to almost getting killed and contemplates his mortality as well as the brain emulation program. He must make his way back to his apartment.*

"60 seconds of gameplay"

The player exits his room and wanders around the main area of his apartment. There is an exit to the far left and next to it is the shared bathroom. To the right is the kitchen with an attached counter where they cook and eat. Straight ahead there is a couch next to a bookshelf where they read.

The player walks to various parts of the area and as they approach elements that can interacted with, they will press the corresponding button and animation and audio will play as a result. The player walks over to the bookshelf and is prompted with looking at a specific book. The animation will then have the MC remove the book from the shelf and say something about it before putting it back.

After looking around the player sees there is another bedroom next to theirs. They go to the door and select the prompt to knock. The roommate comes to the door and asks the MC "What is up?". They will begin speaking about the research the roommate is taking part in and the character can select various statements from the dialogue tree to continue the conversation.

Level Assets

The following characters will need to be modeled, textured, and rigged for the level.

- *Player character*
- *NPC Roommate*
- *NPC in stairwell*
- *NPC in elevator*
- *NPC Apartment Office Manager*
- *NPC on bench to explain plants*

The following structures will need to be modeled and textured for the level.

- *MC's Apartment*
- *Train Yard*
- *Grocery Store*
- *Other Apartment buildings (5)*
- *Office Buildings (4)*
- *Sidewalk*
- *Road*
- *Low-res Background buildings to be off in distance.*
- *Trees*
- *Bridge Walkway*
- *Fence to prevent player from going into water area.*

The following objects will need to be modeled and textured for the apartment interior.

- *Upstairs apartment space*
- *Desk (2)*
- *Computer Monitor (2)*
- *Beds with pillows and blankets (2)*
- *Window curtains (3)*
- *Closet door*
- *Nightstand*
- *Kitchen Counter*
- *Built in stove top*
- *Microwave*
- *Kitchen Sink*
- *Stools (2)*
- *Bookshelf*
- *Couch*
- *Rug*

- *Bathroom Sink*
- *Toilet*
- *Bathtub*
- *Interior doors*
- *Exterior doors with number plates and door locks*
- *Stairwell door*
- *Stairs*
- *Elevator*
- *2nd floor hallway*
- *1st floor hallway*
- *Security door*
- *Keypad/keycard reader*
- *Front lobby space*
- *Front office window*
- *Front office door*
- *Lobby Doors Sets of 2 (2)*
- *Lobby Plants*
- *Light Fixtures for Hallways*
- *Light fixtures for apartment*

The following objects will need to be modeled and textured for the city.

- *Railroad tracks*
- *Railing/ fence to divide Railyard from sidewalk*
- *Statue outside office complex*
- *Crosswalk*
- *Crosswalk signal lights*
- *Streetlights*

Visual References

Various reference images for the level.
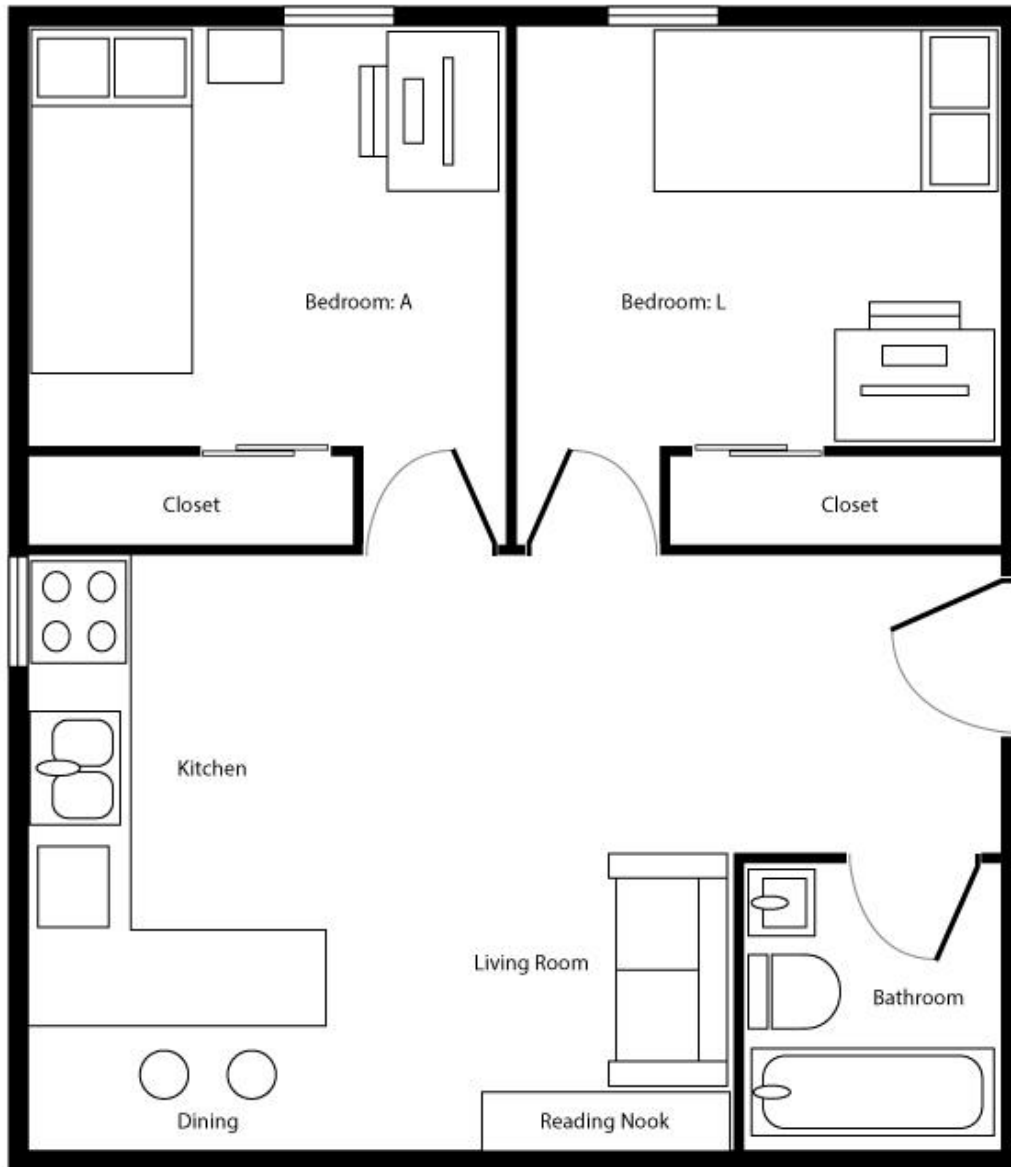
Maps

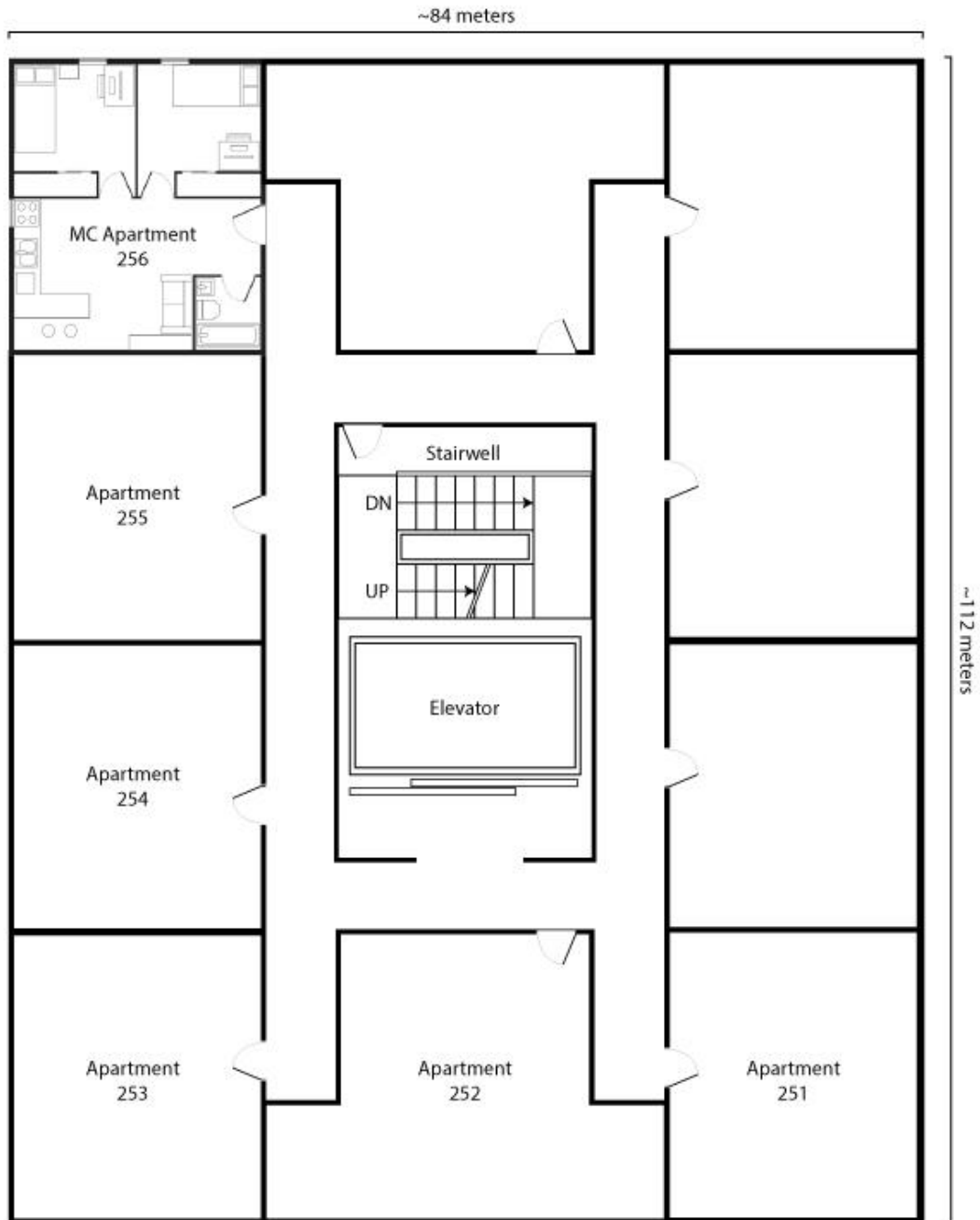*The following images are the base design for the MC's apartment, building and city block.*
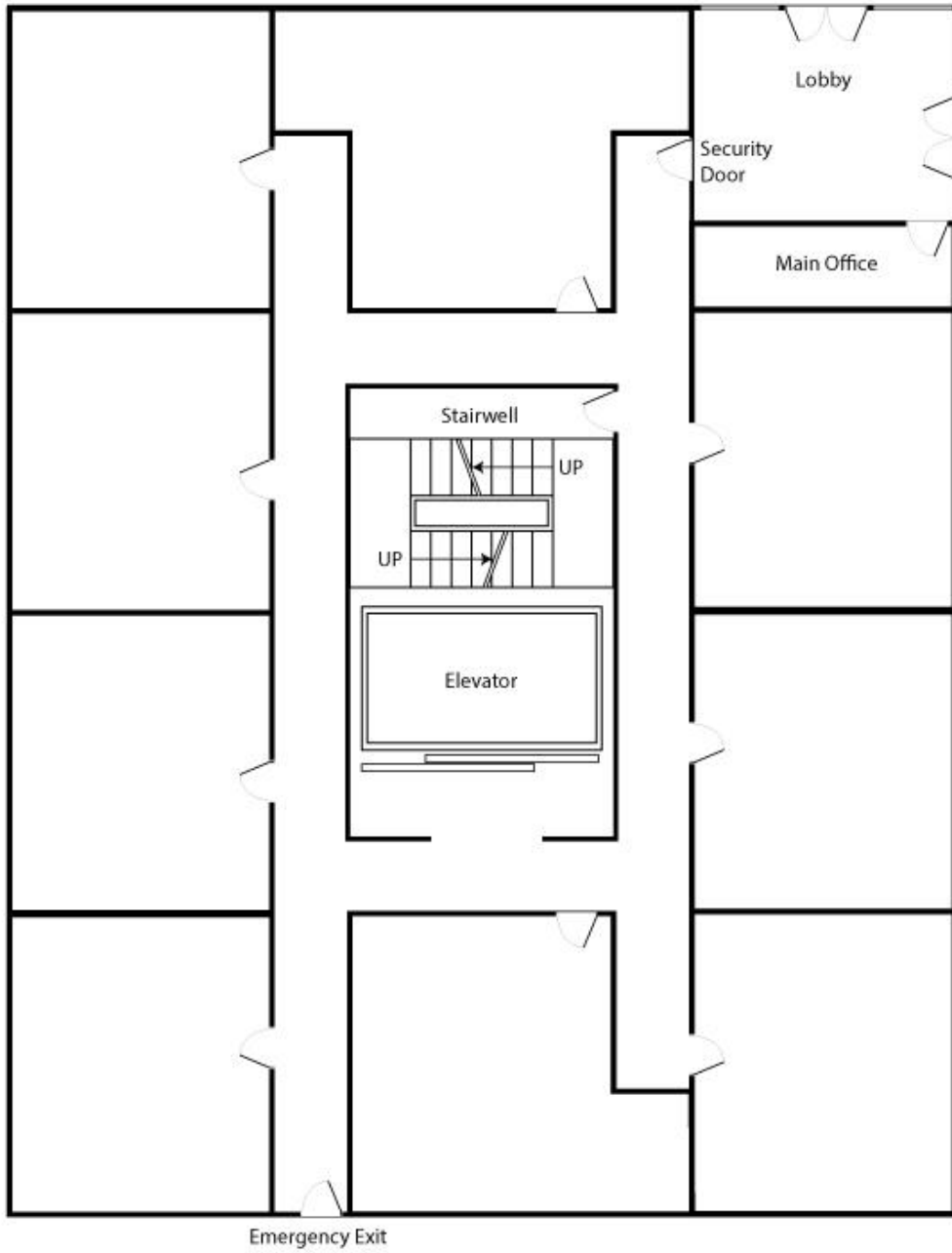
Main Character's Apartment floorplan   note: Not to scale

Full Apartment floorplan Floor 2

~84 meters

~112 meters

MC Apartment
256

Apartment
255

Apartment
254

Apartment
253

Stairwell

DN

UP

Elevator

Apartment
252

Apartment
251

Full Apartment floorplan Floor 1

Lobby

Security
Door

Main Office

Stairwell

UP

UP

Elevator

Emergency Exit

General Apartment Location