

Project Proposal

by James Doward

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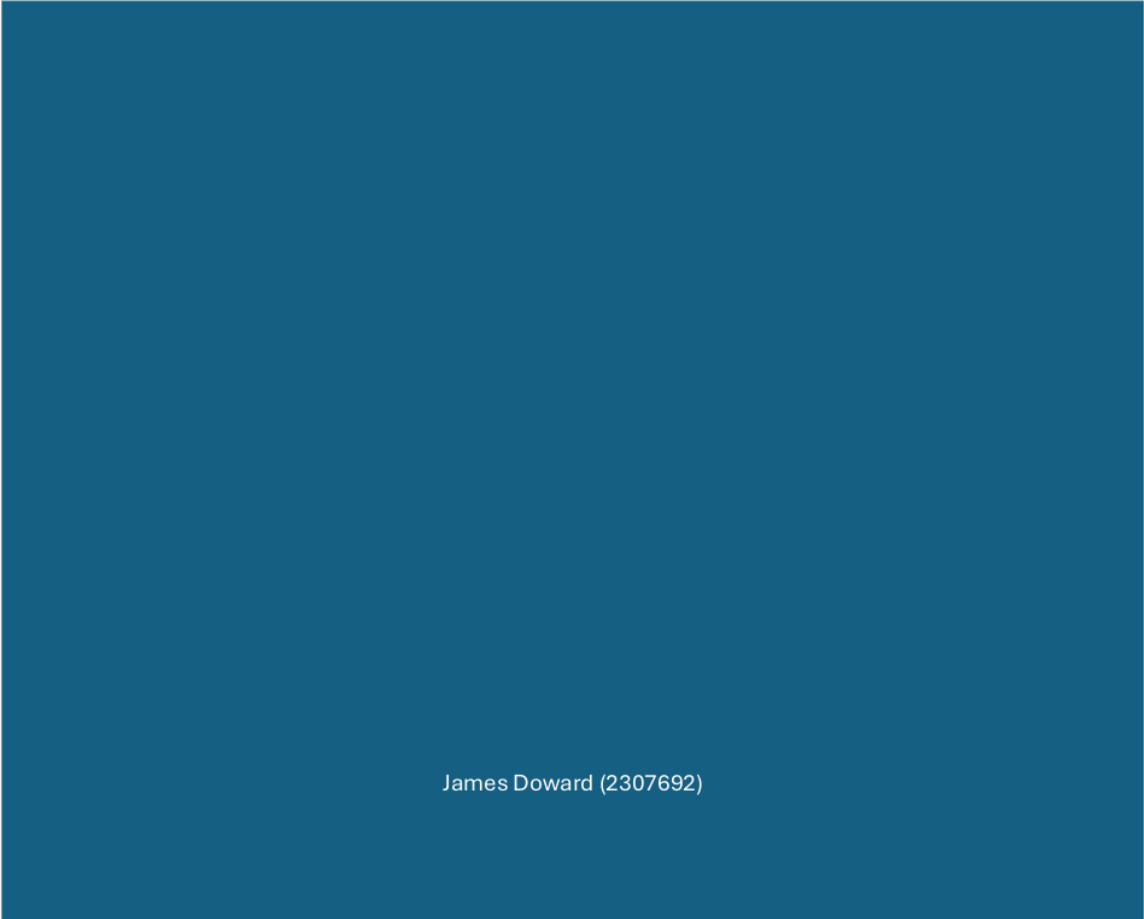
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BA GAMES - HOW REAL- WORLD ARCHITECTURE IS USED IN GAMES AND HOW CHANGES CAN AFFECT A PLAYER'S ENGAGEMENT



James Doward (2307692)

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BA Games

How Real-World Architecture is Used in Games, and How Changes can Affect a Player's Engagement?

James Doward – 13/10/2025

Supervisor: Rich

Identifying the problem

In video games architecture and structures are a core part of filling the game world and making it feel alive, but even when a game has architecture that is very close to the real world it can still be compromised for gameplay.

For example, in the article by The Conversation, "How architecture shapes video game play" [1]. The author takes Assassin's Creed II [2] and takes about 15th-century Florence where players can run and climb in the streets on Florence it is so close to real life that people who have played the game can orientate themselves well but there were changes and compromises that were made for either gameplay or technical reasons.

This article highlights why architecture is so important in video games as it isn't just some background to help you feel a bit more immersed the game, it can drive a players emotions, behaviours and push the game in a narrative way and so changing these buildings can lead to the player being taken out of the game and even push through to real life and offend the country or culture that the buildings have been inspired or taken by.

Aims and Objectives

The main aim of the project is to investigate how architecture is used, how it is changed or compromised, and how this can lead to a negative view and or experience with the game. This project will be achieved by making an asset pack that will have little to no changes made to the real-life buildings. And analysing player responses to the models in an environment.

SMART Objectives

1. To develop an asset pack. While also fully texturing the models and putting them in an Unreal Engine scene.
2. To Measure players immersion and engagement with the asset pack with completed surveys.
3. Within the time frame, fully model at least 10 buildings, texture them and if possible, put them into a scene in Unreal Engine.
4. To create a literature review on how architecture is used in video games, with a focus on studies and articles that relate to architecture in games and how important it is to a game's world.
5. To complete all my aims – research, asset pack creation and texturing, player testing and finally documentation all within six months.

Why is the project worth doing

Knowing why and how architecture is used in games and how these buildings can immerse players in a world and give them an emotional connection to that world is fundamental point that game designers need and this project hopefully will show how we can include architecture in games without having to change or compromise them.

Success criteria for this project

To look at architecture in games and why these structures are so important which through my research which will include surveys after the asset pack creation to get qualitative data on the connection between architecture and a player's immersion, and this will support the creation of my asset pack.

Deliverables

1. Document: A document showing my research into the topic and how I use this for the asset pack
2. Asset Pack: An asset pack of 15 fully modelled and textured buildings.
3. Player Surveys: A survey that will look at the buildings I model and see if players are more or less immersed/connected to the game world.
4. Presentation and Final Product: A presentation that will summarize all my research and show how architecture is used and changed in games and how this can affect a player's time with the game, and an asset pack that as a scene that shows off the models.

How the written work relates to the project

The written work research will investigate how architecture is used and changed in games. And the practical task will take this research and apply it to the asset pack where I can make models that represent the real-world architecture while not being that different from the real world and the feedback from the surveys will either support or oppose the claims in the research.

What has been done in the field



[3]

Architecture in games:

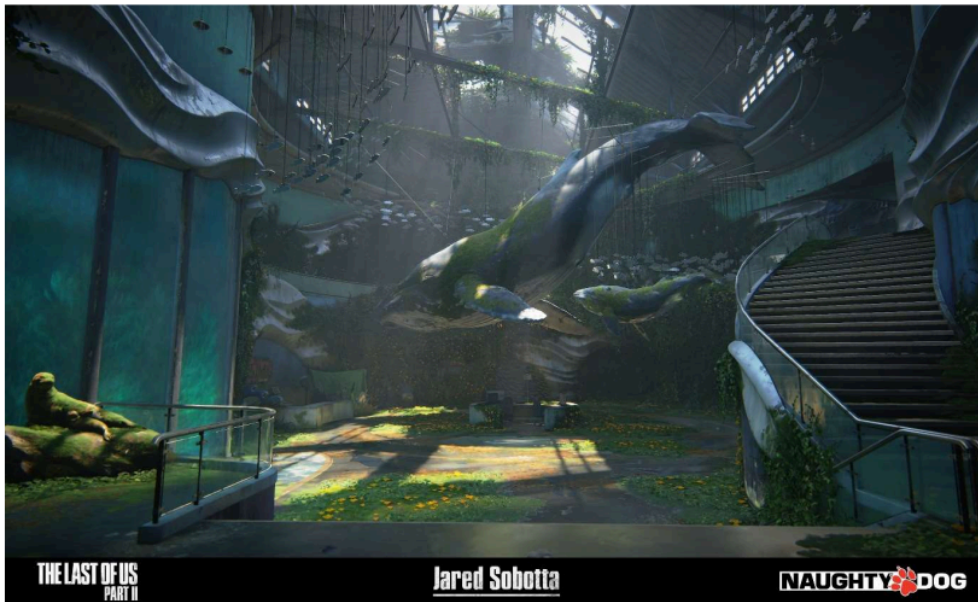
“Games do hold deep meaning for gamers since they experience multiple different stories told in many different ways. In architecture, games give us the tools to express ourselves like in “Sims”” [4]. Architecture in games is usually the first physical thing that player might interact with so getting it right and on theme with the game will be the first thing that would determine whether the player is going to feel connected to the world or not.



[5]

Impact in the design:

The scale and proportions of a building or structure in games is just as important to consider when making decisions as the scale can really make you feel like you are a tiny person in a giant world or the opposite as this article talks about with a game called Journey [6]; “The landscape and buildings are scaled well with the character and other assets of the game” [7].



[8]

Tone in the architecture:

Architecture in games isn't just the buildings and structures around the player's it is also the tone that is created in the game world for example in the image above the world of The Last of Us 2 [9] depicts the passage of time after a viral outbreak well. And as this article says: “Each video game's virtual backdrop and landscape are created by these skilled people, adding realism and excitement to the player's engagement and experience” [10].

Topic Familiarity

I have a solid understanding of architecture design, game design and asset creation because of my academic studies and my own self learning experience. The skills I have include 3D modelling, texturing, scene creation in unreal and UV unwrapping which will all be essential for this project.

But I am still learning, and this project will allow me to really hone my skills and learn some new skills and tools in the software's I will be using like Maya and Substance Painter.

Brief Literature Review

E. Adams, (2002) "Designer's Notebook: The Role of Architecture in Videogames," Game Developer. [11]

This article looks at how architecture is used in games and the role it serves.

D. Van, Buren, (2002) "Architecture in Video Games: Designing for Impact," Game Developer. [7]

This article looks at the impact architecture has on a player's engagement and immersion with a game through the game world.

G. Aroni, (2025) "How architecture shapes video game play," The Conversation. [1]

This article looks at how architecture is more than just the backdrop that a player would look at.

G. Kutsal, (2023) "The thin line between games and architecture: Videogame Atlas," Parametric-Architecture. [4]

This article looks at difference between real world architecture and architecture in games and how they connect to each other.

A. R. Kumar, "Relationship between the gaming industry and architecture," Rethinking The Future. [12]

This article looks at relationship that gaming and architecture has and how it can mean different things in both fields.

Models & Concepts

-Cleaner theory [13]: A look at how designers lack language for shape and volume in buildings.

-Mental Models [14]: A look at how our brains perceive and process information in front of us and of the outside world.

-Psychology of Immersion [15]: A look at the psychology of how player's get immersed in games.

-Ethical Worldbuilding [16]: A look at how to make environments feel alive and while be true to cultures.

-Uncanny Valley [17]: A look at the phenomenon called uncanny valley where people feel a strong discomfort at something that seems to real when it isn't.

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Project Proposal

GRADEMARK REPORT

FINAL GRADE

GENERAL COMMENTS

73/100

BA GAMES – PROJECT PROPOSAL – ACCA6020
INDEPENDENT PROJECT (5%)

Student **James Doward**
Mark **73%**

Intro / A&O (500 words)		
Project title; Identification of a specific problem to be investigated; Well-defined aims and SMART objectives; Explaining why this project is worth doing; Discussion of what the project needs to do in order to be a success; Description any deliverables that will be produced at the end of the project	40	28
SMART objectives have been included as part of the proposal which is good as it indicates evidence of analytical thinking and an appreciation of project scope.		

Exploration of immersion through environments is an ideal project and an asset pack would make for a good piece of practical work at the end of the degree. Consider taking this to the next level by assembling models in an actual environment (whether fictional or real-world) as this would also be a good self promotion tool and give test subjects something to engage with as part of your research.		
Background to the Project (500 words)		
Description of how the work to be done by in the project relates to the work identified in the literature review; Discussion of any ethical issues raised by the project Identifying what has already been done within the field; Topic familiarity; Brief literature review using appropriate sources – 6-8 journal papers and book chapters rather than just websites; Selection of relevant models & concepts Inclusion of a concise Literature review is helpful as this serves as a good starting point for the dissertation. It also indicates you already have sources of information to pursue.	40	31

Research is varied in nature and utilised literature as well as online sources. This can also extend to other forms of architectural representation such as film and TV if desired. A number of concepts and phenomena are listed in relation to the work, which is good to see – again, this indicates research and knowledge are a motivational factor in the proposal.		
Document Presentation		
Correct spelling, grammar and punctuation; Flow of narrative/fluency; Coherence; Word processed ; Correct use of referencing with bibliography; Strict word limit Good use of IEEE referencing has been evidenced throughout the proposal and a range of sources has been included, with justification for specific articles outlined in a brief literature review. The proposal is well structured and easy to follow with headings for each topic.	20	14

A few small typos feature in the work but these can be corrected fairly easily with time devoted to editing.		
TOTAL	100	73

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