

GHOST WALKER POSTMORTEM

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Introduction

Ghost Walker was a solo game I made for a university assessment centred on Experiential Design. I went for a point and click, hidden objects puzzle game with text dialogue cutscenes. I made this decision as I wanted to showcase both narrative and puzzles due to the fact, I was unsure which of the 4 cups to centre my game around, so I went with trying to incorporate both. I chose to do the solo version of the module because I wanted to push myself to learn more and understand Unity better without having others who could do the parts I couldn't. I also wanted to be able to develop my solo skills and ability to be creatively free.

I got the idea for Ghost Walker when I was looking through some old notes about games I wanted to make, of which one of them simply said "a game about a ghost detective". I took this small idea and ran with it initially and brainstormed some ideas for a ghost detective game, I also looked at potentially a game where the main character has to solve the murder of a ghost who's stuck in purgatory who needs it solved in order to move on and then the idea, I settled with was the last one I came up with. I really like ghosts and the idea of the afterlife as well as detectives who investigate homicides and serial killers, so I thought why not put them both together and work on something I had a lot of interest in.

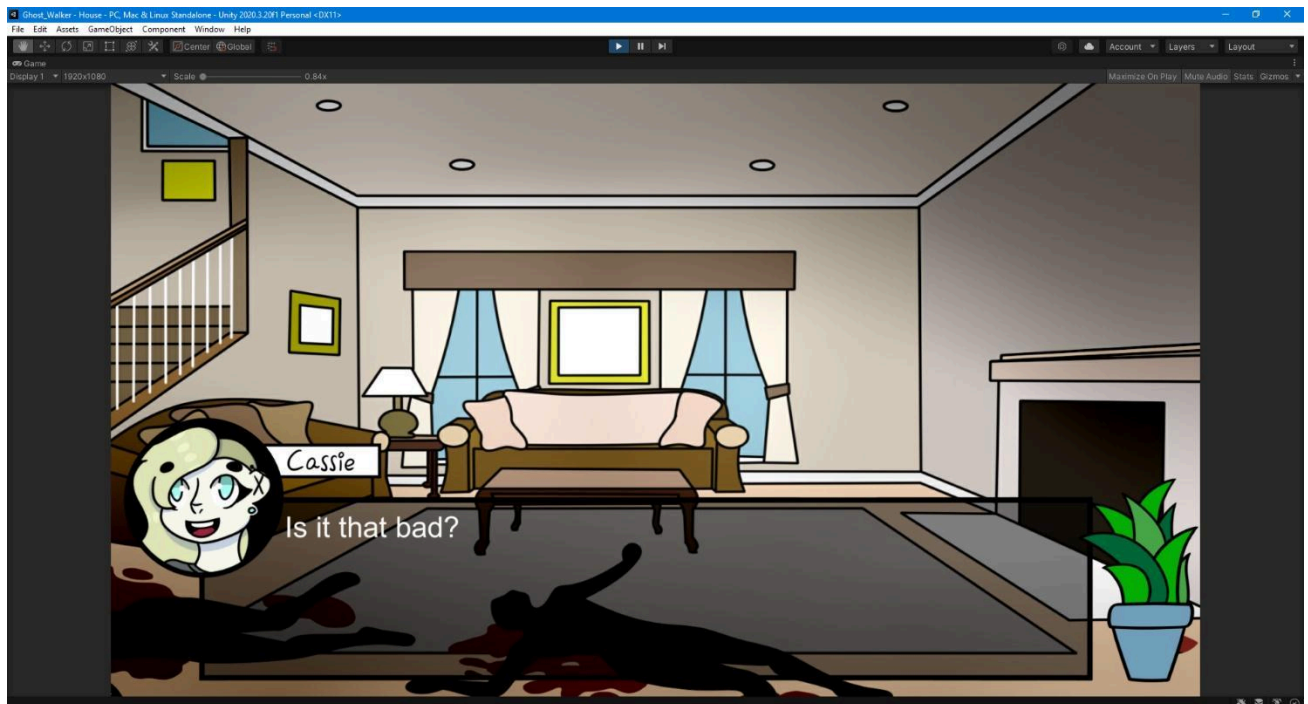


I settled with this final idea when I landed on the "ghost lens" mechanic I thought of using, which in the end had to be removed due to over scope and the fact I had no idea how to do said mechanic. I hadn't looked around much to see if this mechanic or something similar existed in other games in the past, but I'd like to think it was a fairly original idea in the way that I wanted to use it. The only game that comes to mind with something similar is Detroit

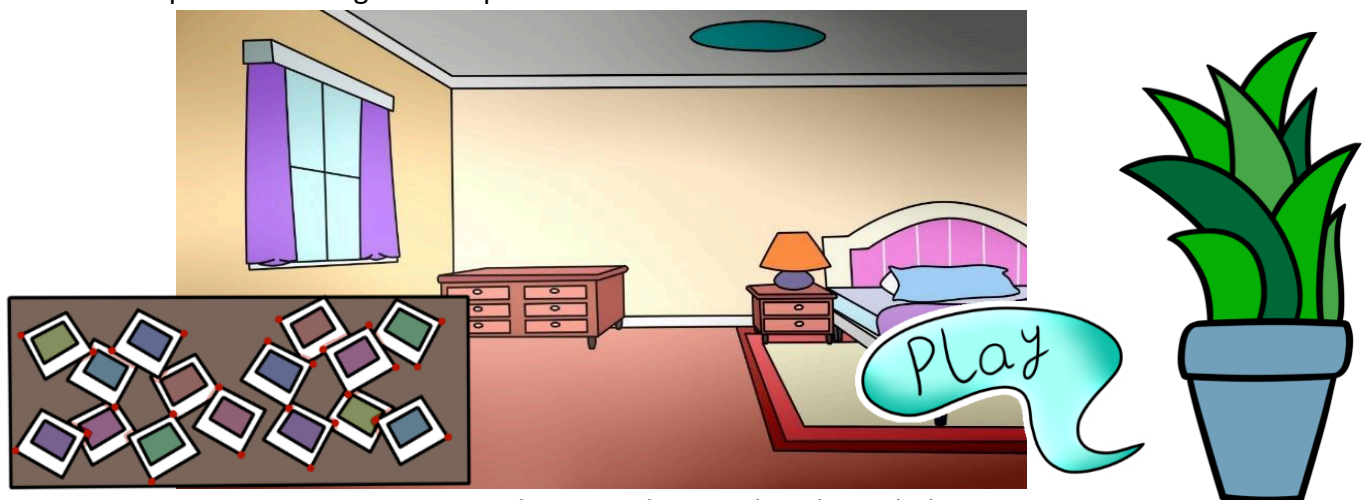
Become Human by Quantic Dream when you can scan the area and see things that normal humans can't see, seems as you play as androids for the entire game.

What Went Well

Personally, I thought that what I managed to create of the game was actually good quality wise. I managed to achieve a working dialogue system and all of the artwork was to a good standard. I feel as though creatively the game was headed in a good direction and the story I had planned for it and ideas I had were solid and would've been executed really well if I'd had more time.



The documentation and planning for the game in terms of narrative, characters, level, etc was something I thought went really well. It's all clearly laid out and if this had been a group game based on my documentation, I think with a little more added to the game design document and level document, it would've been one of the strongest parts of it and therefore responsible for a good end product.



The artwork is another thing I believe went well. I managed to pull myself out of my comfort zone quite a bit by drawing objects and

backgrounds, which isn't something I have much experience drawing unlike characters. While not all the backgrounds are visible when playing the game, they were all finished and imported into the unity project and I'm very happy with a lot of the results. It's easy to distinguish the objects that were supposed to be interactable from the backgrounds themselves.



Character design is something I've been doing for many years now and it's something I thoroughly enjoy the process of. I feel as though without full body or half body sprites it's hard to tell in game how much effort went into the character creation, which is a shame because I am really proud of the characters I designed, from both their visuals and more backstory information elements. The main characters of Cassie and Brooke were my main priorities alongside the first, and potentially ongoing killer, Ella. Without strong designs for these main three, I feel as though the game would've fallen flatter and had no personality to it. But luckily, I think they turned out pretty good. If I were to remake this game or continue it, I would definitely include half or full body sprites to showcase their designs and have more on screen for the player to see

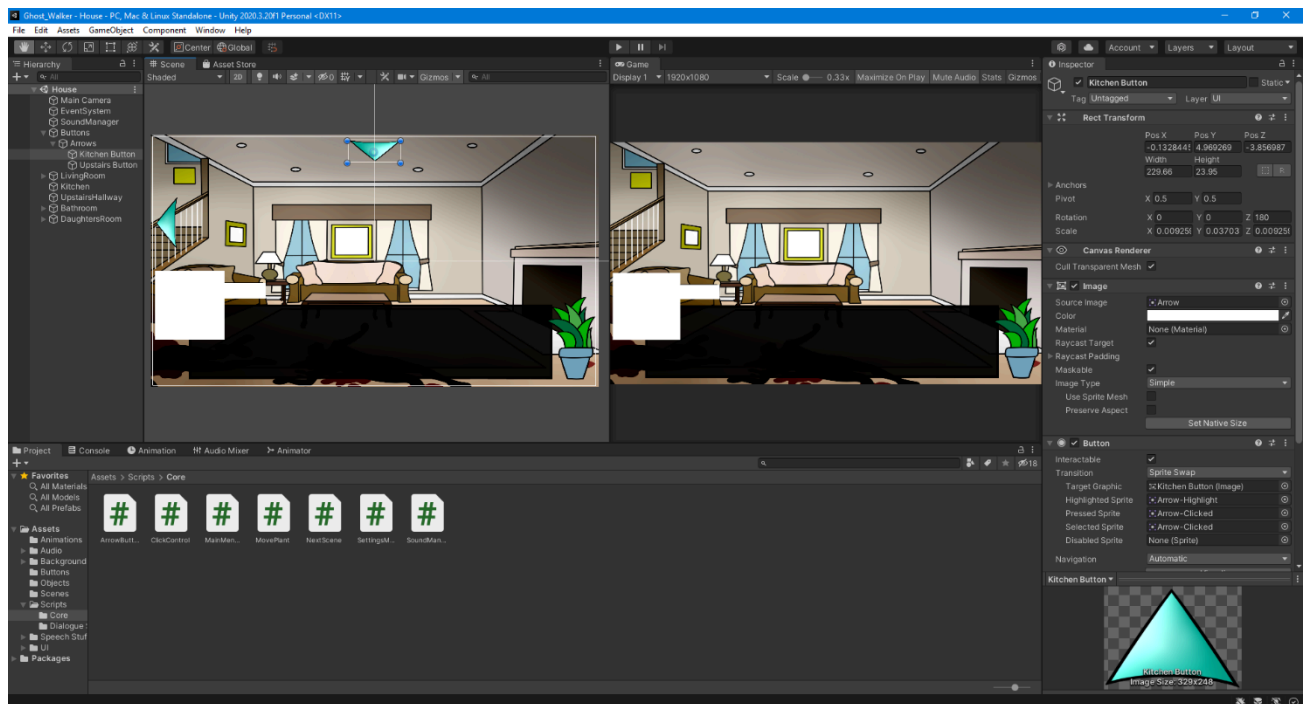


and connect to.

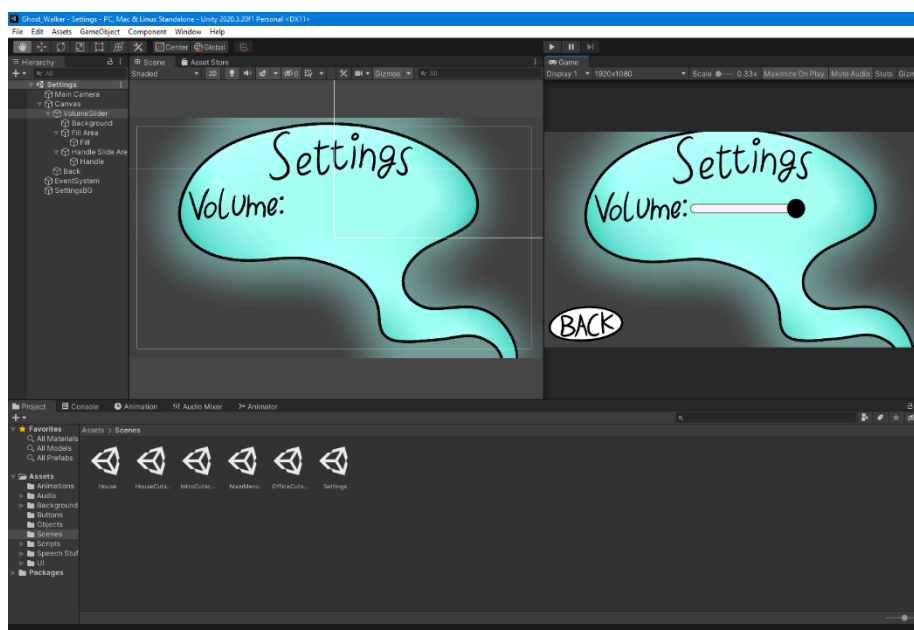
What Went Wrong

The game itself is incomplete, this is for a multitude of reasons but mostly due to over scoping of the project. The initial idea had to be changed several times in pre-production because it just was not feasible within the time frame and even when mechanics were removed at the beginning of production, it was still really hard to not increase the scope subconsciously. Removing these mechanics from the game to help avoid over scope also led to the idea needing to be changed multiple times both during pre-production and production to reflect the name game. It had gone from being a visual novel game with a heavy focus on narrative to a 2D puzzle game and back and forth a few times before I could finally settle. My indecisiveness to settle on an idea and see it through to the end combined with my limited scripting skills in Unity is mostly what caused me to have to go for something very simple compared to what I actually wanted to make in the beginning. If I

hadn't spent so long deciding on an idea and changing it through the entirety of pre-production and then the beginning of production, I don't think I would've had quite as many problems as I did later on down the line.



With the idea I settled on which my game design document is based on, I did intend to have a mechanic called the “ghost lens” which the player could toggle on and off to see the crime scene through the ghost’s eyes to reveal hidden details like blood trails, scuff marks, fingerprints, etc. I had no idea how to script or make this mechanic work at the time and during production and I tried to find help online but came up short a lot of the time. I could’ve solved this problem and saved the time wasted in production by searching for how to potentially make this mechanic when I first thought of it. This would’ve saved me a lot of



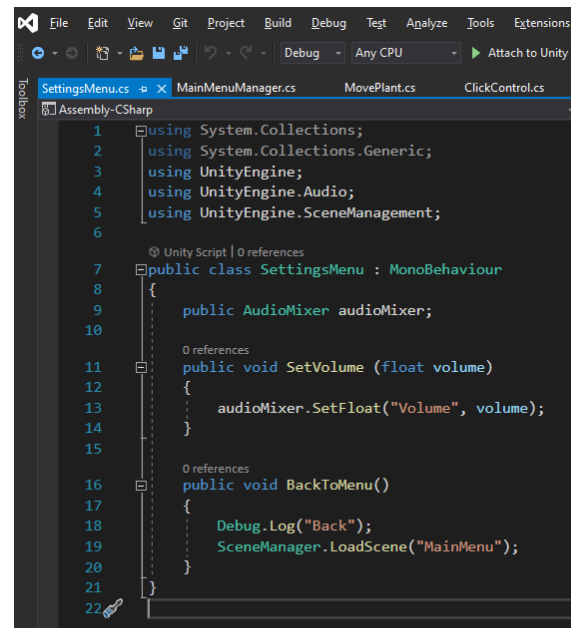
wasted time trying to guess and searching for answers that just didn't exist.

Something else that took some time to learn but I didn't manage to get to work was the volume slider for the settings screen. It's present within the game but once you exit the settings screen, it reverts back to the normal position and doesn't actually change the volume of the sounds in game, which can make them quite annoying after a while as it's a singular sound that plays when the characters speak. The tutorial I watched to help me achieve the slider showed it working but not how to make it stay that way once exiting back to the previous scene and I didn't have time to find a way to fix it. I would've liked to have gotten some music in the game but without the working volume slider, I knew it would get very annoying when I was test playing or when I had others playtest if there was no way to turn it down as not everyone would've like the music in game, as I know for me personally, I turn the sounds down on most of my games when I play.

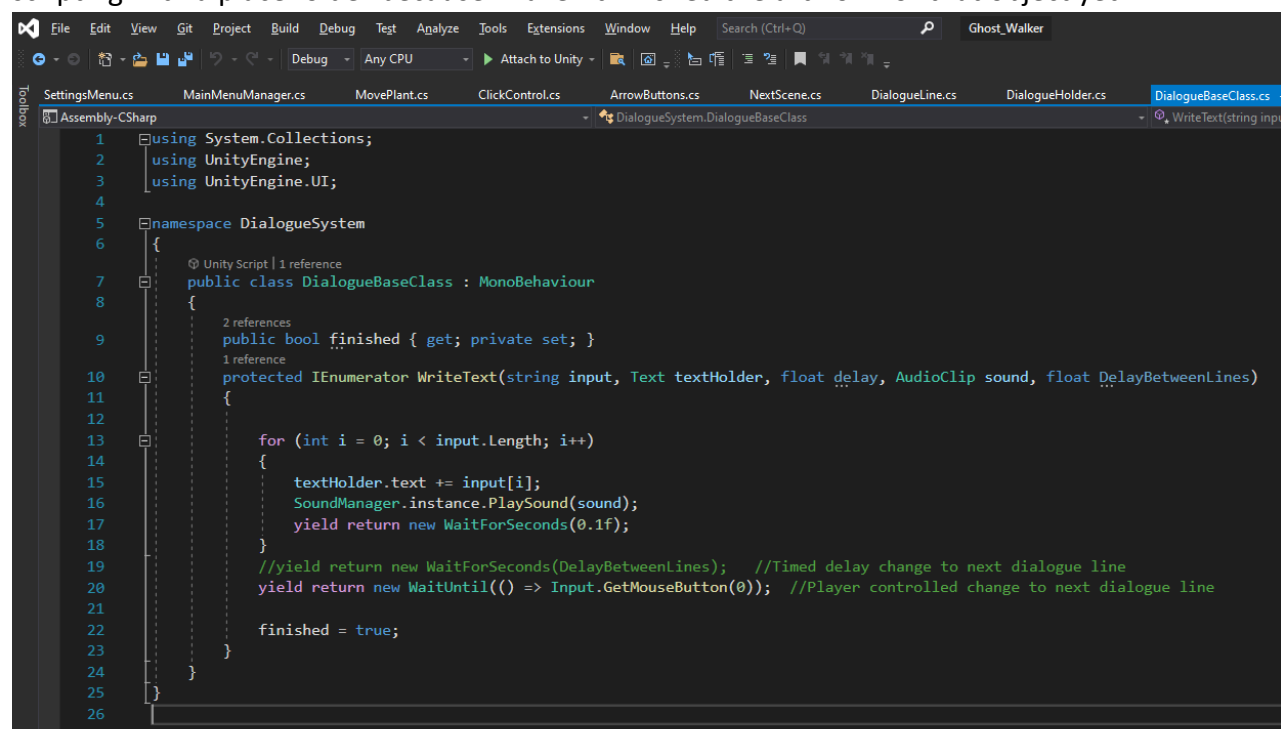
What I learned

This project has helped me to learn what my own capabilities and limitations are when it comes to making a game on my own. It showed me that I still have a lot of progress to make before I work on a game with a deadline by myself and that I am better off either working on my own skills or working in a group with others where I can be tasked with things I'm capable of doing. I also learned that I have ambitious ideas but lack the ability to execute them because of those personal limitations.

I have also learnt that I still need to work on my time management skills. They're better than they were but I think next time I do this I definitely need to follow a schedule to stay on track and make sure I get work done in a set order rather than just as of when I feel like doing the scripting with a placeholder because I haven't finished the artwork for that object yet.



```
1 using System.Collections;
2 using System.Collections.Generic;
3 using UnityEngine;
4 using UnityEngine.Audio;
5 using UnityEngine.SceneManagement;
6
7 public class SettingsMenu : MonoBehaviour
8 {
9     public AudioManager audioMixer;
10
11     public void SetVolume (float volume)
12     {
13         audioMixer.SetFloat("Volume", volume);
14     }
15
16     public void BackToMenu()
17     {
18         Debug.Log("Back");
19         SceneManager.LoadScene("MainMenu");
20     }
21 }
22
```



```
1 using System.Collections;
2 using UnityEngine;
3 using UnityEngine.UI;
4
5 namespace DialogueSystem
6 {
7     public class DialogueBaseClass : MonoBehaviour
8     {
9         public bool finished { get; private set; }
10         protected IEnumerator WriteText(string input, Text textHolder, float delay, AudioClip sound, float DelayBetweenLines)
11         {
12             for (int i = 0; i < input.Length; i++)
13             {
14                 textHolder.text += input[i];
15                 SoundManager.instance.PlaySound(sound);
16                 yield return new WaitForSeconds(0.1f);
17             }
18             //yield return new WaitForSeconds(DelayBetweenLines); //Timed delay change to next dialogue line
19             yield return new WaitUntil(() => Input.GetMouseButton(0)); //Player controlled change to next dialogue line
20             finished = true;
21         }
22     }
23 }
24
25
26
```


In the future, I need to definitely learn my scripting. It's something I struggle to understand and remember how to do without tutorial videos a lot. Troubleshooting when I have issues with scripts is also really difficult for me and therefore, I need a lot of practice. If I were to do this game again, I would like to try out using Unreal and blueprinting to see if I find it easier, as I am a more visual learner and I find that blueprints remind me of flowcharts so it may be easier for me to understand, and use compared to scripting in Unity.

Conclusion

In conclusion, time and scope were the biggest hurdles for me and in the future, I will definitely look to avoid the issues I had with this project so that I can have a finished game to show off in my portfolio. However, I am happy with the progress I made in my learning of new systems, such as the dialogue system, and I can't wait to implement it into future work with ease.

For the project itself currently, I would like to continue it in my own time so that I can have it as a finished game for my portfolio. Although, if I do continue it, I may start from the beginning and switch to Unreal to give it a go and see if I get along better with that seems as I always have lots of issues with learning and understanding scripting and C# in Unity. I feel as though it would also be good for me to at least have a basic understanding of how both of the programs work so I can make an informed decision for future projects, like personal ones with friends, my final major project and even solo indie games after university is finished.