

Ash Street Games LLC

The House on Ash Street

Game Design Document

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Game Design

Game Title:

The House on Ash Street

High-Concept Statement/Elevator Pitch

The House on Ash Street is a psychological puzzle horror game that asks the question “What if H.P. Lovecraft was right?.” Just imagine if Silent Hill, The Haunting, and the Shining combined into one experience.

Executive Summary

The House on Ash Street is a narrative horror adventure with puzzle and exploration aspects to drive key moments of gameplay. The game is broken into the stories of two characters, an insurance fraud investigator, and a detective. While each has their own unique experiences within the house the investigator is a prologue and helps introduce the player to the unique mechanics within Ash Street. Drawing inspiration from stories like The Haunting, The House on Ash Street does not have a traditional enemy set and instead the antagonist of the story is the house and surrounding landscape itself.

Players will attempt to escape the cursed house using the objects discovered around them and their instincts to avoid hazards and survive the experience. Drawing inspiration from classic horror games such as Resident Evil and Silent Hill the puzzles will drive the story while allowing player progression. In game mechanics will allow players to bypass certain obstacles if they become too difficult.

Key Features (Hooks/Pillars)

- Objects within the house can be used to attack the player.
- The player can dodge objects.
- The entity in the house can shift time and the environment.
- The detective can use his pistol with limited ammunition to bypass locks or some puzzles.
- The entity will warp the player around to disorient them and attempt to keep them in the house.

Genre

Psychological Horror / Puzzle

Target Audience

Mature Players 18+

Campaign Story

- Backstory
 - 1860 – House Built by Lester Hugh Desmond, a wealthy businessman who invested in lumber and mining
 - 1885 – Wife & daughter contracted cholera and passed away
 - 1887 – Lester became secluded and was not seen outside the house
 - 1888 – Sanity waning Lester began having deliveries of occult books and strange texts
 - 1890 – Lester attempted a ritual to prevent future suffering in the world
 - 1890 – The rituals failed burning down the house and everything inside
 - 1892 – Strange stories began about the lands around the house and shadows around the building ruins
 - 1989 – The house is discovered by amateur journalists decaying but intact. No signs of it ever burning down.
- Synopsis
 - Prologue
 - 1992 – Paranormal Investigator missing
 - Six Months Later – Insurance investigator becomes trapped.
 - Main Story
 - Two Weeks Later – The detective is called to the house.

Setting

During the prologue the player will control the insurance investigator attempting to escape the house. Believing they made it out alive the house uses a final attempt and pulls the investigator back in. The main campaign will then begin with the player taking control of the detective. The detective is also trapped by the house however his will is stronger and the house must resort to more extreme measures to attempt to trap the player. During this portion the game will take place split between four dimensions of the house and surrounding area. New puzzles will challenge the player, and new threats will be revealed in each dimension.

Gameplay Overview

While both characters are progressing through the house they will have to overcome puzzles, avoid the house attacking them and the house attempting to set them back.

Campaign Objective: The campaign is split into three chapters with the prologue as an introduction and tutorial. The main quest will be divided into chapters titled 1. The Detective, 2. Torment, and 3. Redemption

- Prologue: The investigator.
 - Player must attempt to escape the house as the insurance investigator
 - Player must solve chess gate puzzle
 - Find the two pieces to open the gate
 - Player must solve bookcase puzzle
 - Find the two missing books to open the passage
 - The player must navigate the underground maze
 - House warps them to the basement which leads to underground caverns and catacombs
- Main Quest: The Detective.
 - The player must attempt to escape an even more aggressive form of the house.
 - The investigation
 - Player meets local officers and his partner to investigate the abandoned car and blood stains
 - Detective has been looking into this area for years
 - Player is advised to check the cellar
 - Entering the cellar triggers first transition
 - All other officers and signs of struggle disappear
 - Attempting to leave the scene warps the player into the house
 - The twisted house
 - The house changes what doorways lead to which rooms.
 - System designed to have set transitions between specific doorways
 - The other dimensions
 - Alternate dimensions modify the floorplan of the house and visuals of the game
 - Utilized data layers to dynamically change game in real time.
 - To leave a dimension the player must find one of the books detailing the unnatural incantations used back in 1892
 - Defeat the heart
 - Discovering books scattered between dimensions allow player to access the “heart” of the house

- Destroying the heart warps the player back to the entrance of the cellar before entering
- Puzzles
 - Moon Phase Puzzle
 - Four switches must be hit in order of puzzle hint to unlock door
 - Hint is:


Beneath the waxing crescent soft glow,
A silhouette emerged, a tale to sow.
In waning crescent's light, terror unfurls,
As the full moon's grace fails, destiny swirls.

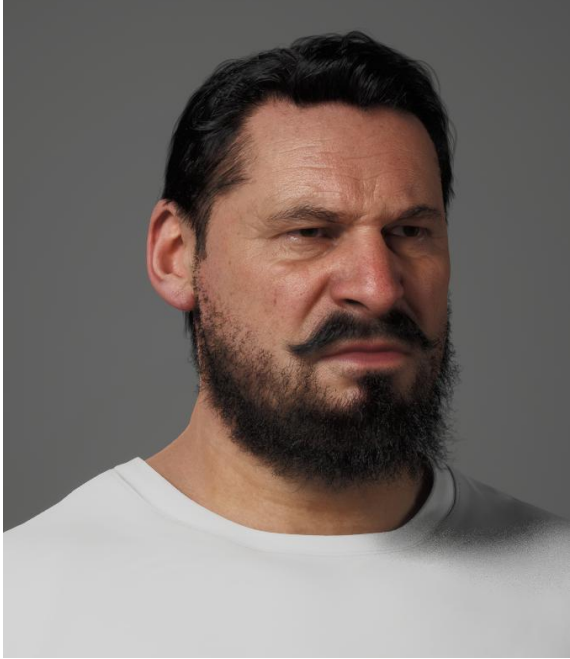
No salvation in lunar beams so bright,
The full moon's glow, a futile light.
The new moon rises, a harbinger of doom,
Slowly sealing our impending gloom.

Silent shadows dance, whispers in the night,
The new moon's sight, a creeping blight.
In the dance of darkness, we're ensnared,
As fate's cruel design is coldly declared.
 - Flesh Puzzle
 - Flesh World – Player is blocked by wall of growing flesh and a decaying body fused to the wall
 - Body is the insurance investigator
 - Body hints to missing body parts
 - Finding eye, arm, and jaw allows conversation with body
 - Body tears open flesh wall to reveal passage
- The shapes
 - The Desiccated Corpse
 - A desiccated corpse that is inhabited and controlled by a creature from the flesh world
 - Cannot kill the player but knock them out and move them to a random room
 - The old one – Name to be determined
 - Barely visible from the house because of the immense size
 - Spider like in shape with crablike arms and claws along the visible legs touching the ground

- Hard carapace with shifting oil slick colors and unnatural movement
- Slowly walking and scouring the landscape
- Skittering Creature
 - A small creature that resembles a mix of crab and a spider with a large extendable mount filled with sharp teeth.
 - Often hiding in dark areas and moving quickly if spotted.
 - Will make a chirping sound when approached.
 - When close enough it will dash at the player, take a bite, and run away.


Characters

| | |
|--|---|
|  | <p>The Investigator: Late twenties private investigator for an insurance company.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disheveled and often described as shady looking the investigator cares only about finding information for an insurance company and getting paid. Driving an old used car and often living out of it he is unshaven with matted hair. • Controlled by the player's movement is traditional FPS controls with the ability to run, crouch, and jump. • The investigator can move quickly to the side to avoid objects and threats. |
|--|---|

| | |
|---|--|
|  | <p>The Detective: In his mid-forties the detective is well dressed and groomed. Wearing a suit without a jacket and sleeves rolled up he carries the original revolver he was issued in a side holster. He keeps a Nokia 1011 phone, a notebook with pen, a pack of cigarettes, and an antique lighter in his pockets.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • background and description of character • Controlled by the player movement is traditional FPS controls with the ability to run, crouch, and jump. • The investigator can move quickly to the side to avoid objects and threats. • The detective can use his pistol to shoot open locked chests and doors to receive items or progress. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ammunition is limited to six shots. |
| | <p>Ghost Orb (Blue): A swirling mass of blue flames and smoke.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spirit trapped in the house that broke free of the houses will • Floating and can move through doors and walls • Used to guide players and provide hints on next location |
| | <p>The House: The main evil in the game.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses objects in the house to attack players • Will change the environment (time/season) at random • Appears different in each dimension |

Combat System

The player will have to dodge attacks from the house and avoid encounters with creatures within different dimensions.

| | |
|--|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Random Objects:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Objects around the world can be thrown to attack the player.○ Object speed and damage will vary depending on the mass of the object.○ Small objects are fast and can do no more than fifteen damage.○ Large objects are slower but can do up to fifty damage. |
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Skittering Creature:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ When player is in range creature begins “chirping.”○ At attach range creature will run to player position and “bite” the player for eight damage.○ Once “bitten” the creature will run away and hide again.○ Creature can attack again if player enters range. |



- **Desiccated Corpse:**
 - Corpse is slow moving when patrolling the house.
 - Corpse does not patrol until players first encounter.
 - Random pathing through first and second floors of house.
 - Sound and Touch pawn sensing.
 - Cannot be killed by player only scared away.
 - Creature captures player when close enough and knocks player out if HP is more than 25.
 - If player HP is over 25 player awakens hanging upside down in a corpse filled room of the house
 - If player HP is 25 or less player dies
 - If corpse is shot where controlling creature is exposed the creature will scream and run away from the player.
 - Corpse will hide from 30 seconds before wandering around the house again.

Environmental Objects

- **Doors:** Locked and Unlock variations. They are used to guide the player but also prevent access to certain areas.
- **Chests:** Lock and Unlock variations. All chests have a chance of two items inside them. If locked and detective shoots the lock and hits the chest only one item will appear. If the detective shoots just the lock two items will appear.

- **Chess Pieces:** Use to solve the investigators gate puzzle. Hidden within the prologue house.
- **Puzzle Books:** Use to solve the bedroom bookcase puzzle. Hidden in bookcases within the prologue house.
- **Ancient Texts:** Hidden within the alternate worlds. Must discovered by the detective to shift dimensions and eventually placed to destroy the heart of the house completing the game.

Asset List

3D Assets

Interior

| Piece | Style |
|---|---------------------------|
| Wall segment – Long | Old/Flesh/Burned/Pristine |
| Wall Segment – Short | Old/Flesh/Burned/Pristine |
| Wall Corner – 90 Degree | Old/Flesh/Burned/Pristine |
| Wall Corner – Rounded | Old/Flesh/Burned/Pristine |
| Doorway | Old/Flesh/Burned/Pristine |
| Interior Door (2-3) | Old/Flesh/Burned/Pristine |
| Exterior Walls | Old/Flesh/Burned/Pristine |
| Front Doors | Old/Flesh/Burned/Pristine |
| Front Door Frame | Old/Flesh/Burned/Pristine |
| Windows (2-3) | Old/Flesh/Burned/Pristine |
| Window Frames (2-3) | Old/Flesh/Burned/Pristine |
| Bookcase (2-3) | Old/Flesh/Pristine |
| Small table | Old/Flesh/Pristine |
| Small drawer table | Old/Flesh/Pristine |
| Large table | Old/Flesh/Pristine |
| Old bottles (3-5) | Old/Flesh/Pristine |
| Wall paintings | Old/Flesh/Burned/Pristine |
| Wall shelves | Old/Flesh/Pristine |
| Miscellaneous House objects (knickknacks) | Old/Flesh/Pristine |
| Scrolls | Old/Flesh/Burned/Pristine |
| Heart of House | Unique design |
| Altars for scrolls | Old/Flesh/Burned/Pristine |
| Dining room set | Old/Flesh/Burned/Pristine |

| | |
|--|---------------------------|
| Standing lamps | Old/Flesh/Burned/Pristine |
| Desk lamps | Old/Flesh/Burned/Pristine |
| Bedroom Set | Old/Flesh/Burned/Pristine |
| Large cabinets | Old/Flesh/Burned/Pristine |
| Wall paintings with frames (large and small) | Old/Flesh/Burned/Pristine |
| Interior rug - rectangular | Old/Flesh/Burned/Pristine |
| Interior rug – round | Old/Flesh/Burned/Pristine |
| Chairs (2-3) | Old/Flesh/Burned/Pristine |
| Miscellaneous potted plants (3-4) | Old/Flesh/Burned/Pristine |
| Old books (3-4) | Old/Flesh/Burned/Pristine |
| Window Curtains | Old/Flesh/Burned/Pristine |
| Vases (2-3) | Old/Flesh/Burned/Pristine |
| Desk picture frames | Old/Flesh/Burned/Pristine |
| Ink wells / Quills | Old/Flesh/Burned/Pristine |
| Paper stacks | Old/Flesh/Burned/Pristine |
| Victorian Curtains | Old/Flesh/Burned/Pristine |
| Modular stair steps | Old/Flesh/Burned/Pristine |
| Modular stair railing | Old/Flesh/Burned/Pristine |
| Candles (2-3) | Old/Pristine |

Exterior

| Piece | Style |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Outer Wall – Long | Old/Flesh/Burned/Pristine |
| Outer Wall – Short | Old/Flesh/Burned/Pristine |
| Outer Wall Corner | Old/Flesh/Burned/Pristine |
| Outer Wall – 45 degrees | Old/Flesh/Burned/Pristine |
| Tile Roof – Short | Old/Flesh/Burned/Pristine |
| Tile Roof – Long | Old/Flesh/Burned/Pristine |
| Tile Roof Corner | Old/Flesh/Burned/Pristine |
| Tile Roof 45 Degree | Old/Flesh/Burned/Pristine |
| Large front gate | Old/Flesh/Pristine |
| Garden gate | Old/Flesh/Burned/Pristine |
| Tall hedges | Flesh/Pristine |
| Police vehicles (detective & local) | Old |
| Cellar Exit | Old/Flesh/Burned/Pristine |
| Cellar Door | Old/Flesh/Burned/Pristine |
| Entry stairs | Old/Flesh/Burned/Pristine |
| Stone garden wall | Old/Flesh/Burned/Pristine |

Miscellaneous

| Piece | Style |
|-------|-------|
|-------|-------|

| | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Cavern Interior | Dirt / Rock |
| Stalactites | Rock |
| Stalagmites | Rock |
| Old wood beams | Old/Flesh/Burned/Pristine |
| Old God | Unique (rigged) |
| Paranormal investigator gear | Unique |
| Handheld flashlight (Detective) | Unique |
| Investigator clothes | Unique |
| Detective clothes | Unique |
| Desiccated Corpse | Unique (rigged) |
| | |
| | |
| | |

2D Assets

| Item | Use |
|----------------------|----------------|
| Queen piece icon | Inventory UI |
| King piece icon | Inventory UI |
| Blue book icon | Inventory UI |
| Red book icon | Inventory UI |
| Ammunition icon | Inventory UI |
| Health recovery | Inventory UI |
| Inventory border | Inventory UI |
| Inventory background | Inventory UI |
| Main menu background | Main UI |
| Pickup text | Interaction UI |
| Interact text | Interaction UI |
| | |

Audio Assets

| Sound | Variations |
|-------------------|--|
| Intro/Theme music | |
| Background music | Variations for each world |
| Footsteps | Grass/Rock/Gravel/Wood/Fabric/Soft surface |
| Item pickup | |
| Open inventory | |
| Menu button click | |
| Draw gun | |

| | |
|---------------|--|
| Holster gun | |
| Ghost growl | |
| Object impact | |
| Door locked | |
| Door open | |
| Door slam | |
| | |

Animation Assets

1. Investigator

- a. Pick up lamp
- b. Pick up object
- c. Place object
- d. Open door
- e. Death animation
- f. Cutscene animation
 - i. Intro cinematic animation
 - ii. Death transition sequence animation

2. Detective

- a. Pick up object
- b. Open door
- c. Open chest
- d. Switch trigger
- e. Draw gun
- f. Holster gun
- g. Draw flashlight
- h. Pocket flashlight
- i. Death animation
- j. Cutscene animation
 - i. Intro sequence animation
 - ii. Flesh puzzle interaction
 - iii. Outro sequence animation

3. Desiccated Corpse

- a. Walking animation
- b. Triggered animation
- c. Chase animation
- d. Catch animation

- Drag animation
- Flesh Puzzle
 - Talking animation
 - Wall opening animation

Dialogue

Detective Lines

Investigation:

- Random Officers:
 - Officer: Morning Detective. They're waiting for you down the driveway.
 - Officer: Detective. Through the side gate you'll find your partner.
 - Officer: This is the abandoned car. I'm logging everything I find for you Detective.
 - Officer: Morning. They've been expecting you.
 - Officer: This place is all wrong. We should be here sir. Let's hurry up.
 - Officer (repeat/second reply): I'll let you know if anything changes.
- Other Detective:
 - Barlow: Well well look who decided to grace us with his presence. You know you aren't retired for two more months.
 - Detective: Yeah yeah so catch me up, what have we got.
 - Barlow: Well from the nice mess left here I guess an accident with a woodchipper, or we have a homicide.
 - Detective: These drag marks?
 - Barlow: Yup. Leads to the cellar. I'm sifting through the pieces here; you can go check that out.
 - Barlow (repeating): You check the cellar yet?

Miscellaneous Articles:

- Mining Mogul Buys Local Forest
- Mogul Lester Hugh Desmond Builds Mansion
- Mansion Construction Huge Boost to Local Economy
- Ash Street Constructed for Mansion
- Desmond Family Relocates to Ash Street
- Local Cholera Outbreak Spreads
- Desmond Family Tragedy
- Mogul Becomes Recluse
- Rumors of Occult Worship
- Bizarre Sights on Ash Street

- Claims of Mysterious Lights in Forest
- Unexplained Fire Claims Local Landmark
- Ash Street Mansion in Ruins
- Locals Fear Surrounding Forest

Meds:

- This could be helpful later
- I don't think I need this
- That helps

Books:

- The Book of Flesh. Strange something seems to be writhing under the cover.
- The Book of Ash. Why is this book still warm to the touch.
- The Book of Regret. The book seems like it's in shadow no matter where it is.
- The Book of Madness. It has a strange shimmer to it.
- This seems important I should take it with.

Flesh World:

- Puzzle Pieces
 - It almost seems like its still alive.
 - Something is missing here though.
 - Why does this eye seem to still be working?
 - A lower jaw, tongue and all, still moving?
 - Is this arm waving to me?
 - It seems these pieces can be attached.
- Puzzle Solved
 - Its fusing into the wall with the rest of the body.
 - Dialogue
 - Investigator: Thanks. Who knew how much you'd miss being able to shut your mouth.
 - Detective: Who are you and where am I?
 - Investigator: Where? No idea, as you can see I'm stuck here. Who? Well I was an investigator looking for a missing person.
 - Detective: So it was your car that we found abandoned?
 - Investigator: Yeah.. that's mine. Broke down, then all this happened.
 - Detective: So how do we get out of here?

- Investigator: Heh I'm a little screwed on the getting out part. But you might find a way. There's a door behind, well what was me. I think I can open a way.
- Detective: What? Behind that stuff?
- Investigator: Yeah. Let me see if I can use my arm to give you an opening. Man this going to fucking hurt.
- Detective: For what it's worth. Thanks.
- I don't think touching that would be wise.
- The door is jammed by the stuff on the walls.

Ash World:

- The door lock is fused together
- Is there something walking through the ash?

Old God World:

- I can see the handle, but my hand passes right through it.
- Seeing Old God: Nope.

Weapon:

- Out of bullets
- I don't need to reload
- Only a few rounds left

Looting:

- This may come in handy
- Damn, one of the items was damaged
- I can use these bullets

Moon Puzzle:

- I don't think that's right
- There's no handle to this door. How can I open it?
- There must be something in this room.
- Something tells me this is important

Spirits:

- What is that? Is it trying to guide me?
- Is that a woman?
- Wait, a child?
- Huh should I follow it?

Small Creature:

- What the hell is that little thing?
- That's too big for a spider and sounds like a bat.
- Ow! It bit me!
- They're devouring the one I shot.

Desiccated Corpse:

- Is that another person who got trapped here?
- Wait... did it move?
- How the hell is this thing getting up.
- Oh, you have got to be fucking kidding me.
- I need to stay quiet and hide

End Puzzle:

- The markings on these pillars match the books
- I wonder what will happen if I place a book here.
- Nope not the right book.
- That did something.
- The center is exposed. Now what to do.
- That did something.
- Its breaking!

Endgame:

- Investigation Part 2
 - Barlow: Hey, you going to check the basement or just stand there all-day staring?
 - Detective: Nope, not doing this again.
 - Barlow: Doing what?
 - Detective: Enjoy Barlow. I'm taking my retirement now. Fuck this house.

Investigator Lines:

- Hello?
- Yeah I'm still looking.
- I'm telling you the locals say Ash Street doesn't exist.
- Fine fine if you're still paying I'll keep looking.
- Stupid goddamn car. Of all the places to break down. Oh and the phones dead too piece of shit.
- Ugh fuck it. Let's see if there's anything around here that'll help me.
- Huh well I guess it does exist.
- Yeah that's not creepy at all.

- Ugh again with the power!?
- Huh whys this lamp glowing? Maybe its like those watches. Might as well take it with me.
- Locked with chess pieces. Gee. How original.
- Theres something weird about this piece. I should take it with me.
- Theres something not right with this place
- Nah fuck this house I need to get out of here.

Meds:

- Huh I may need these later.
- Nah I don't need these now
- Oh man I feel better already.

Narration

- It was once said there was a house....
- Cursed...
- Broken...
- Lost to time...
- But there are whispers of a deeper rot...
- Something that should be left alone.