**Defining City 17**
Viktor Antonov

In setting a design style for the game's main setting, the fictional City 17, the process was based on the actual evolution of some European cities. The art team began with 19th-century architecture, and on this foundation added building styles from the 1930s, 1940s, and eventually 1970s. When enough realism was achieved, it was time to add the alien touch, much like the Combine putting its own stamp on human civilization.

"One of the reasons that we liked Eastern Europe as a setting was that it represents the collision of the old and the new in a way that is difficult to capture in the United States. You go over there, and you have this collision between all of these things, the new architecture, the old architecture, the fall of communism... there's a sense of this strongly-grounded historical place. We left out the gothic themes associated with Prague and vampires and looked into a different aspect of the region."
- Viktor Antonov
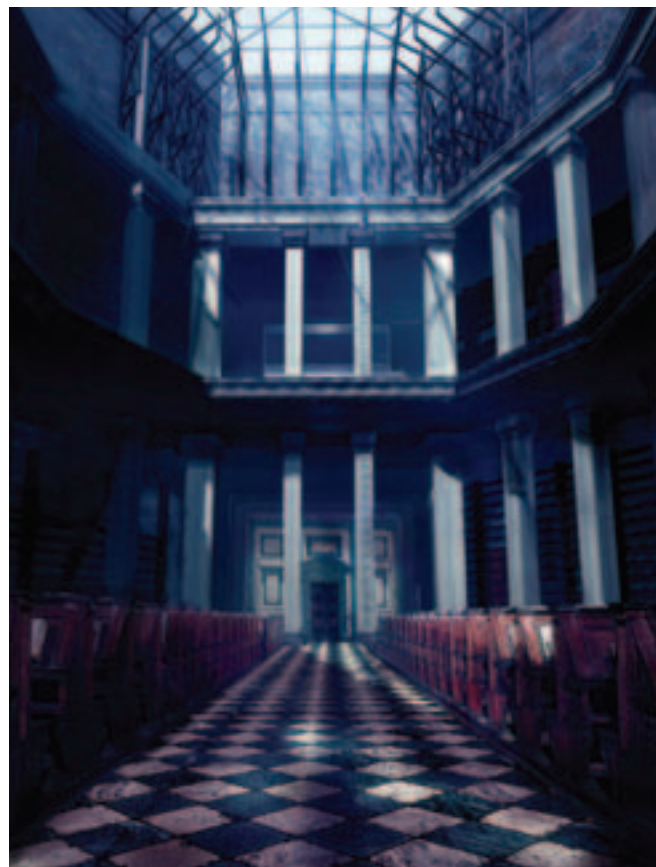
"Half-Life was very stylized both because of the medium and because of the way the game was built. We had to deliberately choose a level of stylization. We could have done 100 percent realistic, but that wasn't really interesting to us. We wanted to give it a little twist, an abstract and surreal feel." - Viktor Antonov