Overview:

As that there was little to go off of for the mechanics, story or objectives so I ended up using skyrim as a basis for a lot of the limitations and gameplay I was expecting for the area. I created the environment based around a sparsely populated medieval setting with a player character that has little with regards to mobility tools ( ie. Without: grappling hook, flight, superhuman jumping/ fall damage negation, teleportation or assassins creed level climbing capabilities). The gameplay is built for a firstperson openworld experience. I took inspiration from a number of European castles and Italian villas for the design of the palace. I fleshed out some of what I consider to be the backstory for the area, trying to make the surrounding area make sense as a functional city including structures that I felt would match the terrain and sources of income/ trade I would expect for the area. Primarily, the landscape was designed with a focus on aesthetics, pushing to emphasize the “beauty” and wealth described in the summary. From the description I believed that having a tall mountain that is separated from a lush plains by the main river would replicate that beauty well especially when occupied by the overgrowth of both the plains and mountain forests.

Backstory:

As the palace is by a river I decided that I would treat it as a strategic trade port with the main resources produced here being lumber, grain and/or minerals. However with wealth also comes danger (a danger clearly shown by the insurrection described in the summary) thus I built the palace as a stronghold built off of the side of a cliff with a defensive position over both the river and city. I felt that with all of the wealth and influence available to the leader of this city he would likely be a rich ponce in personality, creating the buildings within the palace more similarly to that of a villa rather than a strong hold while collecting his wealth within the palace. The main attack forces of the insurrection force came from 2 sources, the first being a water craft that beached itself in the slums before slaughtering their way up both sides of the cliff, while the second was a series of trebuchets that attacked from the fields across the river punching holes in the buildings of the town and littering the streets with potholes and rubble that are still visible in the present. The main goal of the raiders was likely the wealth that the leader held within the villa above. While the leader was unwilling to lose his wealth he did burnt his villa to the ground to keep the invaders out, believing that he could return recollect his riches from the ashes and rebuild his paradise. The raiders managed to capture him however and had him hung from the stocks below the watchtower and slaughtering most of the town population afterword.

Goals:

Whether happening across this area by chance, being sent by an heir or some other means the end goal of the player will likely be to obtain the riches fabled to still lie within the ruins of the palace or otherwise explore the ruins of this lost city. Along the way there are a number of quests derived from spirits or notes that survived the attack to progress the main story line or follow secondary missions.

Main mission:

* The main mission starts when the player collects the key to the secret treasure trove and a message from either an heir that sends you here to begin with or from the corpse of the leader himself with a reminder about employing the blacksmith for another project. It would lead you to explore parts of the town before finding a lockbox within the blacksmith’s home with his journal within. Reading through some of the passages the player can learn about aspects of the town and more importantly the shady work the blacksmith did for the lord. A specific passage depicts his unwillingness to destroy the masterful documents he created for a particular work stowing them away in an unmarked grave in the graveyard. The player can then either search the church for records of the grave’s location or search the grave stones themselves for an untitled one. Digging up the grave would likely draw enemy specters or skeletons around the area to attack. Within contains a number of advanced lock blueprints to a mysterious chamber a note regards giving a spare key to the overseer, pushing the player to investigate the old dock overseer office who worked as the right-hand man to the lord collecting and transporting the massive wealth gained by the trade port. The overseer’s office was on one of the docks near the coast which have long since fallen apart and been swept downstream, leaving much of the building’s contents deposited on the river bottom. After swimming enough in the area, the player will find a rotten wood box with a wand-like object within. It is a quest item that is described in the blueprints as a means to find the vault lighting up when close to the opening of the chamber. After traversing the ruins of lord’s palace, the player will find various collapsed sections of floor that will allow them to reach the basement where the reanimated remains of the attackers will assault them before they find the vault door.

Secondary missions:

* (clear the town mission) there would be a series of locations (appears after the main mission is completed) where you go to specific named locations in the area to collect from or clear out the area while being assaulted by the respective hostile mobs; church-undead, farm-feral pig/feral bull, waterfall pond-monitor lizards, bridge-kelpies, forest-wolves, wheat field-chicken?/snake. These locations could have different win conditions possibly including magic ceremonies of cleansing, killing monsters or dragging out items while vulnerable and under attack. This will allow the player to become more acquainted with the surrounding areas while providing challenges and a notable change in the environment as an outcome. Culminating in the rebuilding and repopulation of the town.
* (escort mission) A ghost who lost their life in the attack and is now possessing his old wood cutters ax found at the gallows. He wants to find out if his family survived the attack. He would direct the player to different points in the city where he will explain where and how the civilians tried to resist (likely including a variety of hostile sectors of the dead combatants or hostile local wildlife), slowly gleaning information about what happened here during the raid. Moving from the lower market of the city up the hill to the church and then finally into the woods where the log cabin his family lived in is situated. The player could either find their dead bodies, a note on them starting a new life or possibly a single grave implying that the child grew up buried the mother after her death and moved on to somewhere else. (possibly a varying selection of the above depending on how the player fights the specters)
* (fetch quest) A goofy quest where the player could find a recipe for roast pork sandwiches (or something of the like) still pinned to a dilapidated bounty board in the middle of town or given from an npc that still lives here and wants a sandwich for something the player requires. This would push the player to fight the feral pigs left over from the now abandoned farm, collect some tufts of wheat from the wheat fields across the river (now overgrown with weeds), make their way to the personal greenhouse of the leader up in the palace (Now collapsed) to collect lettuce, wild tomatoes from the forest and fish up a sealed chest from the river/a pond that has some (now) aged cheese inside. This mission will provide some interesting distractions and interactions within the town making it feel more interactive and diverse to explore.