NAMING THE WORLD

INSIGHTS INTO ENVIRONMENT AND IDENTITY THROUGH INQUIRY BY DESIGN

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A CASE STUDY OF NELSON MANDELA

There is a world named after Nelson Mandela, as evident in the Archive of the Centre of Memory (ACoM) at the Nelson Mandela Foundation (NMF), which includes*:

Streets 163

Gardens 24

Bridges 9

Schools 64

Hospital 1

Sports stadiums

Parks

Buildings 50

Neighbourhoods 7

Squares 17

Universities/educational 56

Highways

Plazas

and so more…

*Estimated number of items as per AcoM on 2021

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INQUIRY BY DESIGN

MEMORIALISING MANDELA IN THE METROPOLIS | NAMED AFTER NELSON

- Design Inquiry is central to the approach followed in the project and provides the methodological framework for exploring graphic heritage.

- Seeking out **portrayals of Nelson Mandela in places named after him** aligns with Zeisel's work on Observing Physical Traces, which concerns systematic approaches to looking at physical surroundings.

- Zeisel's methodology allows for the development of concepts, the formulation of hypotheses, and empirical testing.

- The project explored the related notions of **toponymy** (place naming) and **topophilia** (love of place or physical environment) in connection to places named after Mandela.

- The Named after Nelson exhibition was an impact project that communicated the insights and narratives from the **Memorialising Mandela in the Metropolis** research project to a public audience.

- Large international project team lead by Dr Robert Harland (principal investigator).

NELSON MANDELA BRIDGE

Braamfontein

FACT

ARCHIVE LINKS

NELSON MANDELA THEATRE

Braamfontein

ARCHIVE LINKS

Nelson Mandela Theatre

NELSON MANDELA CENTRE OF MEMORY

Houghton

NELSON MANDELA FOUNDATION
CENTRE OF MEMORY

NELSON MANDELA PARK

Mamelodi

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SIX LOCATIONS

IN GAUTENG, SOUTH AFRICA

Nelson Mandela Bridge, Braamfontein

Nelson Mandela Foundation, Houghton

Nelson Mandela Park

Nelson Mandela Theatre, Braamfontein

Nelson Mandela Village Hammanskraal

POVERTY IS BIG BUSINESS

the mandela stage

M21 Temba Soshanguve

HARRY GWALA AVE Mandela Village

Nelson Mandela Park, Mamelodi

NELSON ROLIHLAHLA MANDELA "A CELEBRATION OF HOPE" 2004

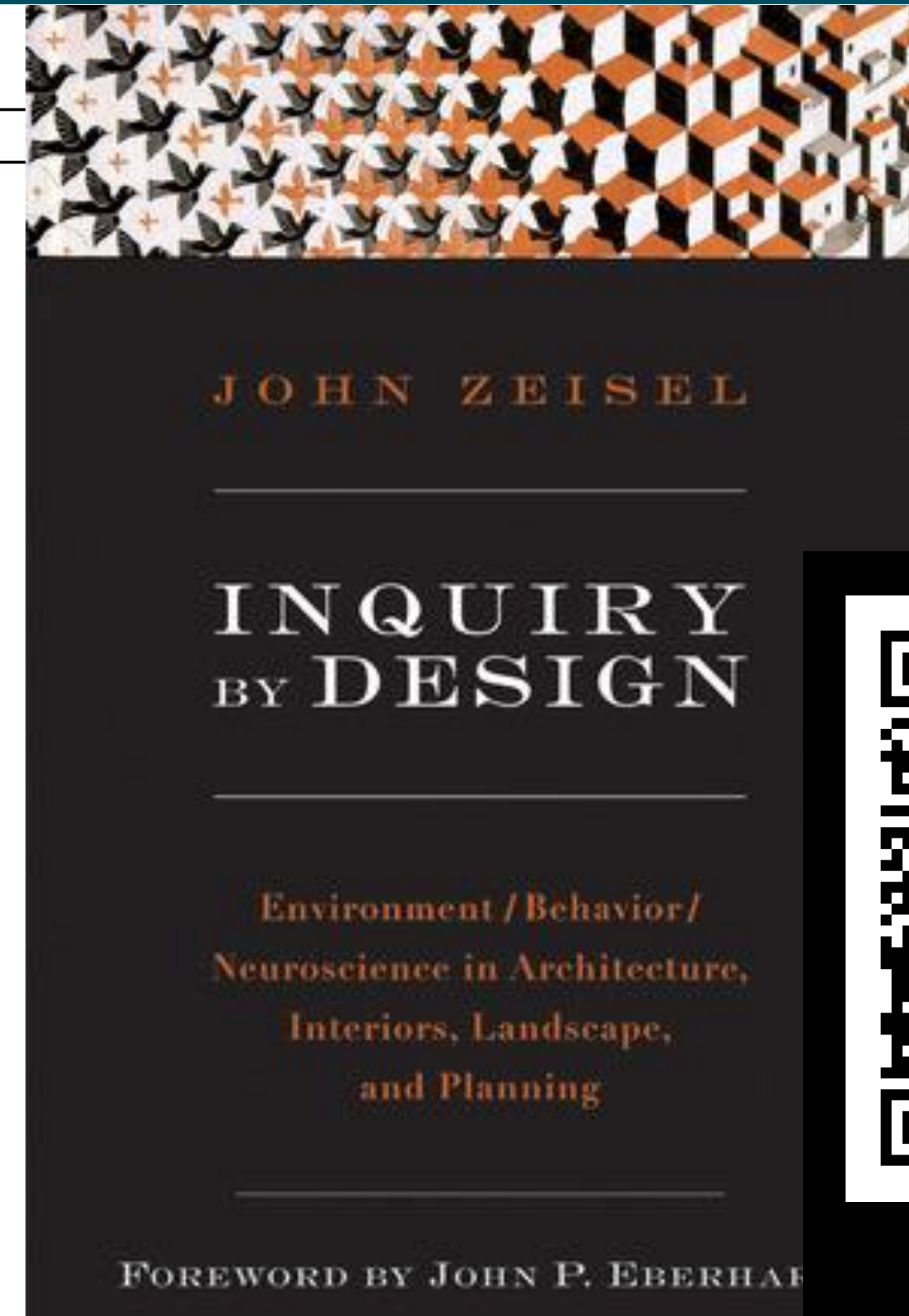Unveiled Nelson Mandela Square, Sandton

Mamelodi

INQUIRY BY DESIGN

JOHN ZEISEL (2006)

Table 1: Aspects of design inquiry that guide this study (adapted from Zeisel, 2006)

Doing research	Observing physical traces	Physical traces to look for
Developing concepts Characteristics Approaches Preconceptions	*Qualities of the method* Imageability Unobtrusive Durable Easy	*By-products of use* Erosions Leftovers Missing traces
Formulating hypotheses Classifying hypothesis Explanatory hypothesis	*Recording Devices* Annotated diagrams Drawings Photographs Counting	*Adaptations for use* Props Separations Connections
Empirical testing Observing Sampling	*What to Look for* By-products of use Adaptations for use Displays of self Public messages Context	*Displays of self* Personalisation Identification Group membership *Public messages* Official Unofficial Illegitimate
(2006: 34)	(2006: 160)	(2006: 170)

JOHN ZEISEL

INQUIRY BY DESIGN

Environment / Behavior / Neuroscience in Architecture, Interiors, Landscape, and Planning

FOREWORD BY JOHN P. EBERHAR

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OBSERVING PHYSICAL TRACES

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AS A METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

- Explorative in nature
- Consciously curious about the phenomena
- Systematically looking at physical surroundings to find reflections of previous activity
- Informs design and urban practice
- Suits the natural ebb-and-flow of the interdisciplinary research team
- Stand-alone or can be complemented by human interactions:
  - Observing Environmental Behaviour
  - Focused Interviews
  - Standardised Questionnaires
- Geographic Information Systems (GIS) may add a quantitative element.

QUALITIES OF THE METHOD

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IMAGEABLE

- Observation of physical traces provides rich impressions and is highly illustrative.

- Once a trace is observed, we ask questions about what caused it, and what the intent was and the sequence of the trace.

- Example:
An unused ashtray may signal that people do not smoke in this place; however, the researcher needs to avoid falsely inferring the intent of the observation since people may use e-cigarettes which would not leave a trace or leftovers may have been left on the ground.
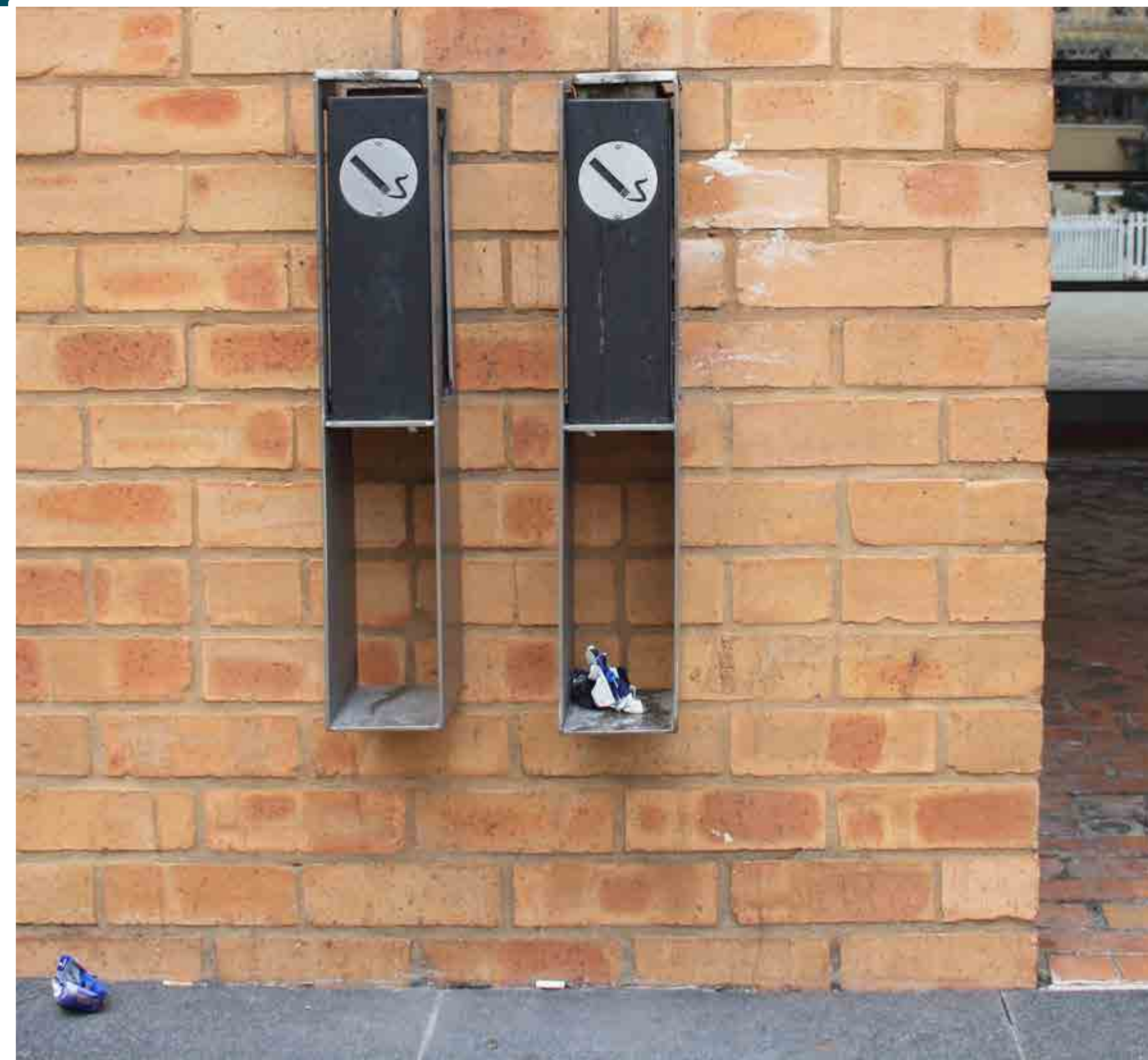
QUALITIES OF THE METHOD

JOHN ZEISEL (2006: 162)

UNOBSTRUSIVE

- Observation does not influence the behaviour that caused the trace.

- Valuable when gathering data about situations that people find sensitive or when respondents have a stake in a certain answer.

- Observing or measuring traces does not require being present when the traces are created.

- Example:
  How people organically use a space versus how it was intended (e.g. benches and play equipment).
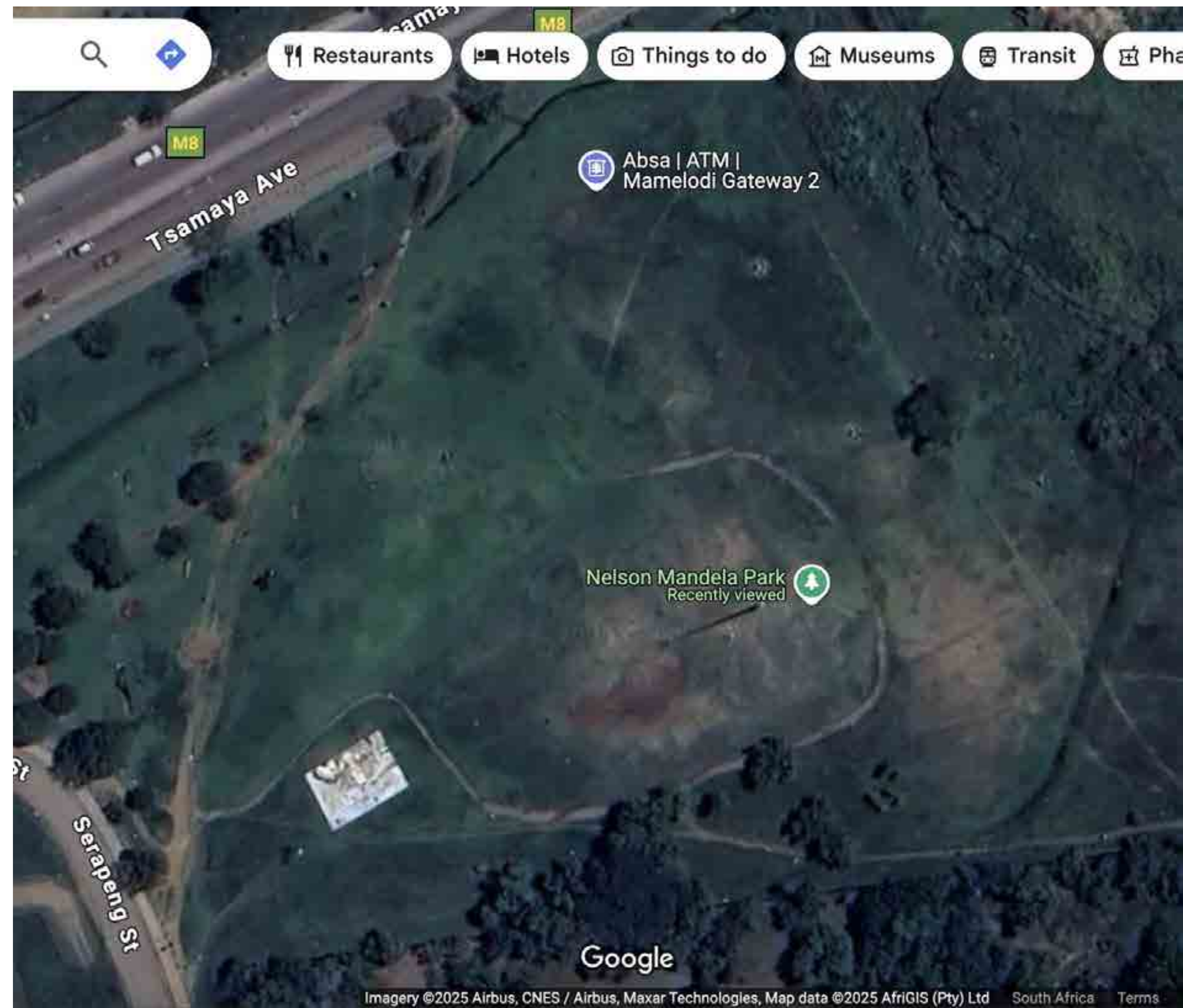
QUALITIES OF THE METHOD

JOHN ZEISEL (2006: 163)

DURABLE

- Many traces do not quickly disappear, allowing for more than one visit to a research site for more observations, counting or documenting traces (I always visit the place more than once).

- A consequence of the durability of traces is their cumulative quality; earlier traces can encourage later ones.

- Example:
We can even see informal footpaths in a park or around play equipment on satellite data sometimes.

QUALITIES OF THE METHOD

EASY

- Physical-trace observation is generally inexpensive and quick to yield interesting information, allowing investigators to explore several initial hypotheses.

- Speed and ease of recording devices such as photographs, sketches and notations.
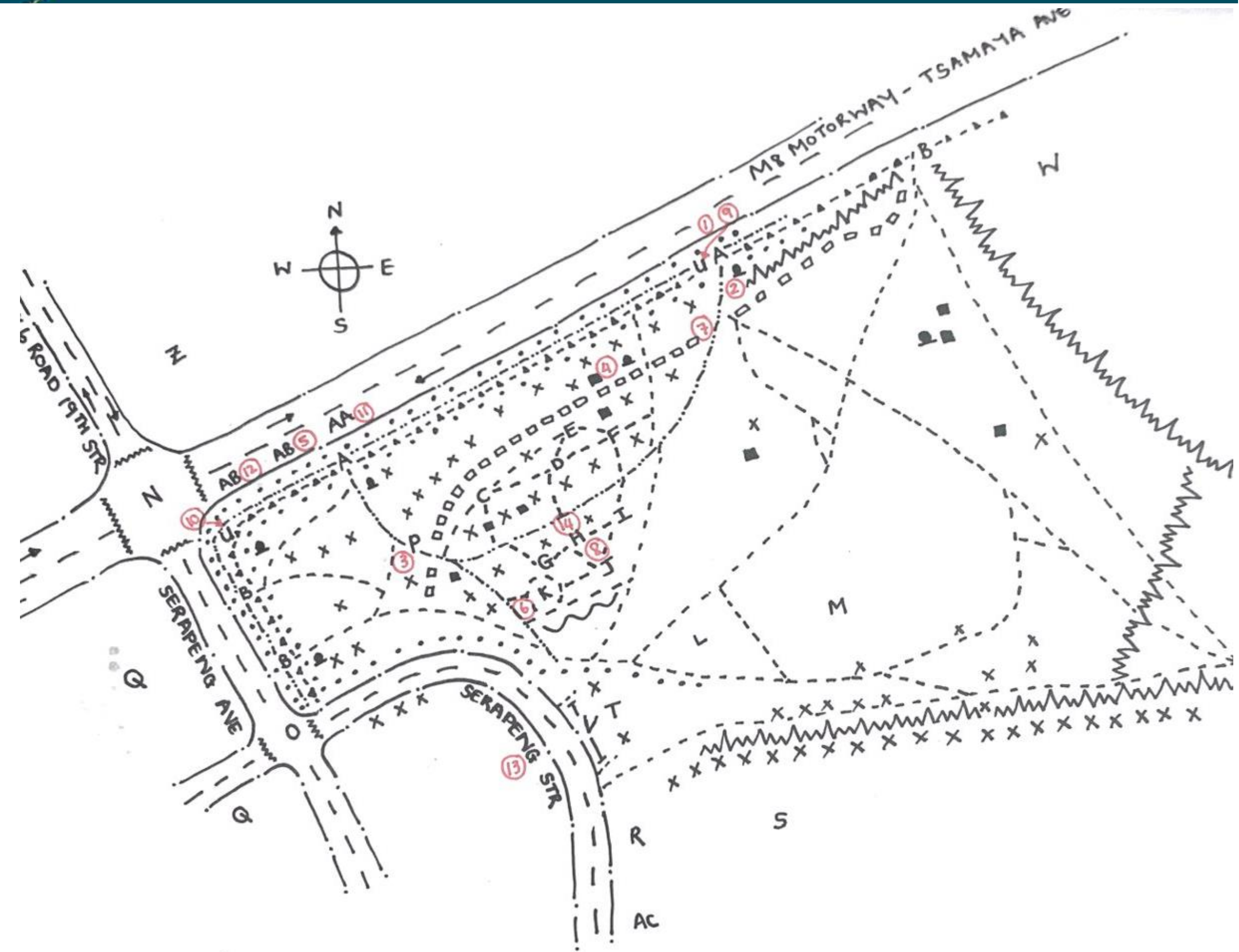
- Avoid: "We already have so much information. Why do we need more?"

RECORDING DEVICES

DRAWINGS

- Drawings are imageable and inexpensive to produce.

- Great for reports or initial observations.

- **STEP 1:** Desktop research with satellite images from Google Maps before visiting a site to provide a sense of what can be observed and the setting.

RECORDING DEVICES

JOHN ZEISEL (2006: 168)

PHOTOGRAPHS

- **STEP 2:** Provides an initial overview of the research site with the first visit.

- May inform categories for counting and what is absent and/or present for the second visit.

- **STEP 3:** Revisit the research site to capture another set of photographs.

- Visual resources for oral presentations and papers to show instances of what traces were observed.

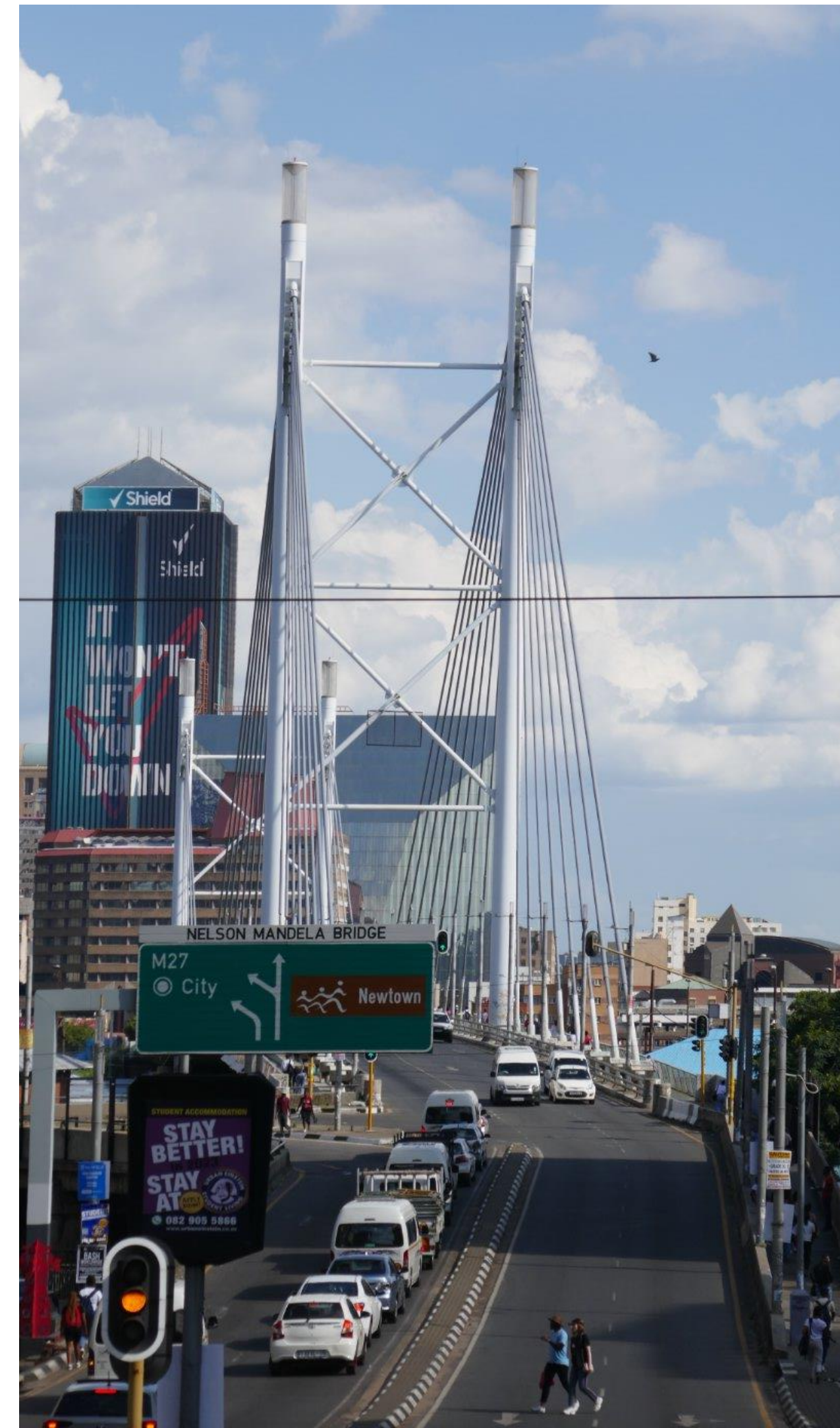*NOTE: Any camera works well but we prefer to take high-quality photographs which can be used for different outputs such as the exhibition.*

RECORDING DEVICES

COUNTING

- Use when the quantity of a trace needs to be considered.

- Example: How many signboards are at a research site that proclaims the placemaking in the name of Mandela.

- **STEP 4:** Count traces on photographs, drawings, and at the physical site.
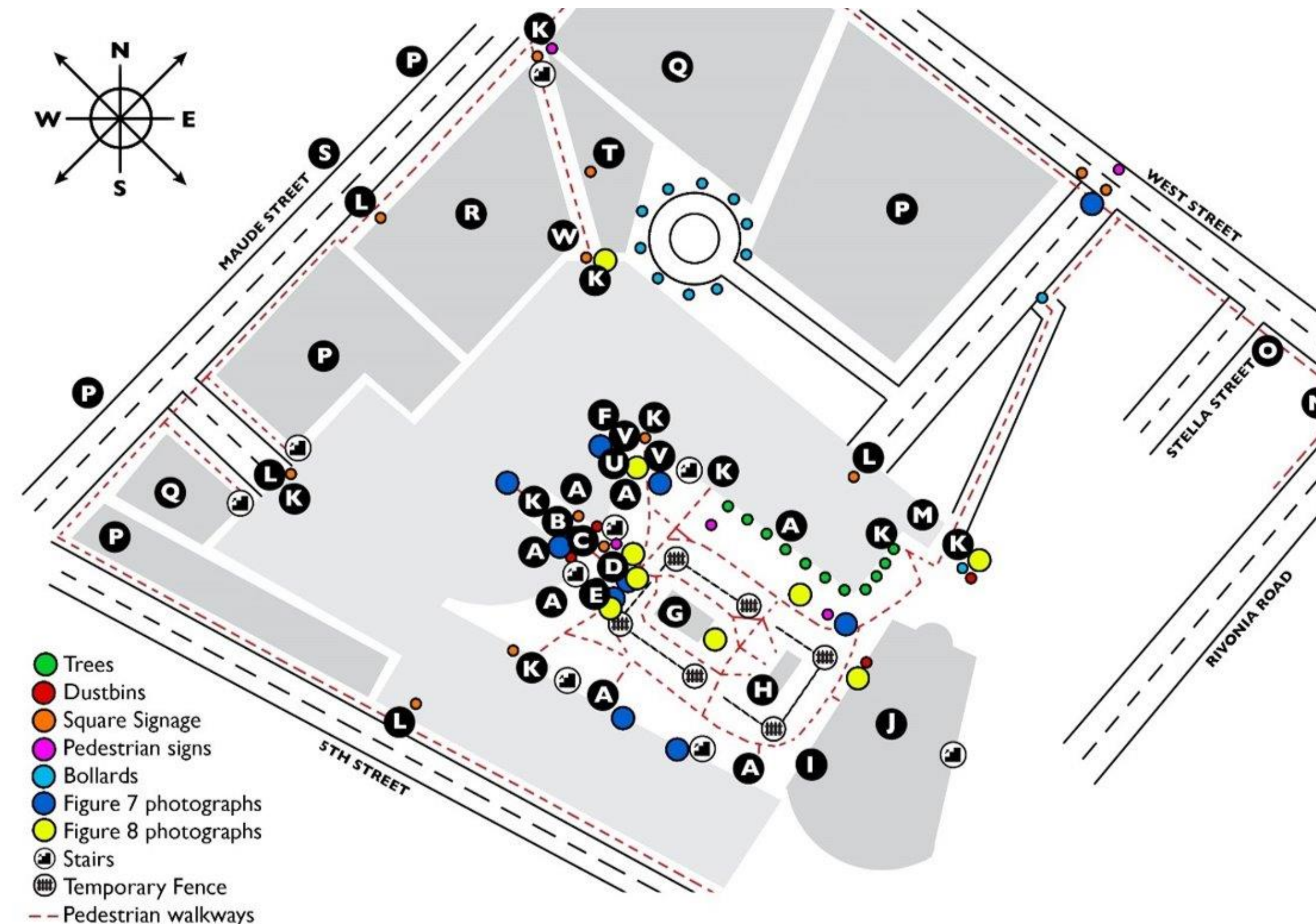
ANNOTATED DIAGRAMS

- Unobtrusive recording method.

- Set of standard symbols to increase comparability of data across different research sites.

- Visually represent where photographs were taken, instances of counting and different types of traces left behind.

- Provides an image of the research site for the reader.

- **STEP 5:** Draw an annotated diagram for reporting.

- ● Trees
- ● Dustbins
- ● Square Signage
- ● Pedestrian signs
- ● Bollards
- ● Figure 7 photographs
- ● Figure 8 photographs
- ⊚ Stairs
- ⊛ Temporary Fence
- – – Pedestrian walkways

A Restaurants **B** South African Flag **C** iMadba project **D** Nelson Mandela 6m/20ft bronze statue **E** Replica miniature statue
F Remember Madiba project **G** Fountain **H** Temporary Stage **I** Tourist Office **J** Sandton Library
K Pedestrian entrance/exit to the shopping mall and square **L** Vehicle entrance/exit to the shopping mall **M** Theatre on the Square
N Subway station **O** New Luxury Apartment Development **P** 5-star Hotel **Q** Business building
R Michaelangelo Towers with exclusive mall and 5-star hotel **S** Sandton Convention Center **T** Shared open plaza
U Remembering Madiba audio point **V** Remembering Madiba interactive screens **W** Gallery

PHYSICAL TRACES TO LOOK FOR

JOHN ZEISEL (2006: 171)

BY-PRODUCTS OF USE

- Reflect what people do in settings – such as traces of litter, worn spots, misused or failed to use space.

- **Erosions:** Wear away parts of the environment such as scars, paths across lawns.

- **Leftovers:** Physical objects left behind such as cigarettes, dishtowels, empty cans, trash.

- **Missing traces:** What is not there and why?

Leftovers

Erosions

Missing traces

PHYSICAL TRACES TO LOOK FOR

JOHN ZEISEL (2006: 173)

ADAPTATIONS FOR USE

- Changes that users make to an environment so it is better suited to something they want to do.

- **Props:** Add objects to or remove objects to create new opportunities for activity such as a stage for music.

- **Separations:** Separate spaces for privacy, control, safety or redirection, such as barriers, fences, and bollards.

- **Connections:** Connect two places to interact in new ways such as ramps, stairs, pass-throughs between to spaces.

Separations

Props

Connections

PHYSICAL TRACES TO LOOK FOR

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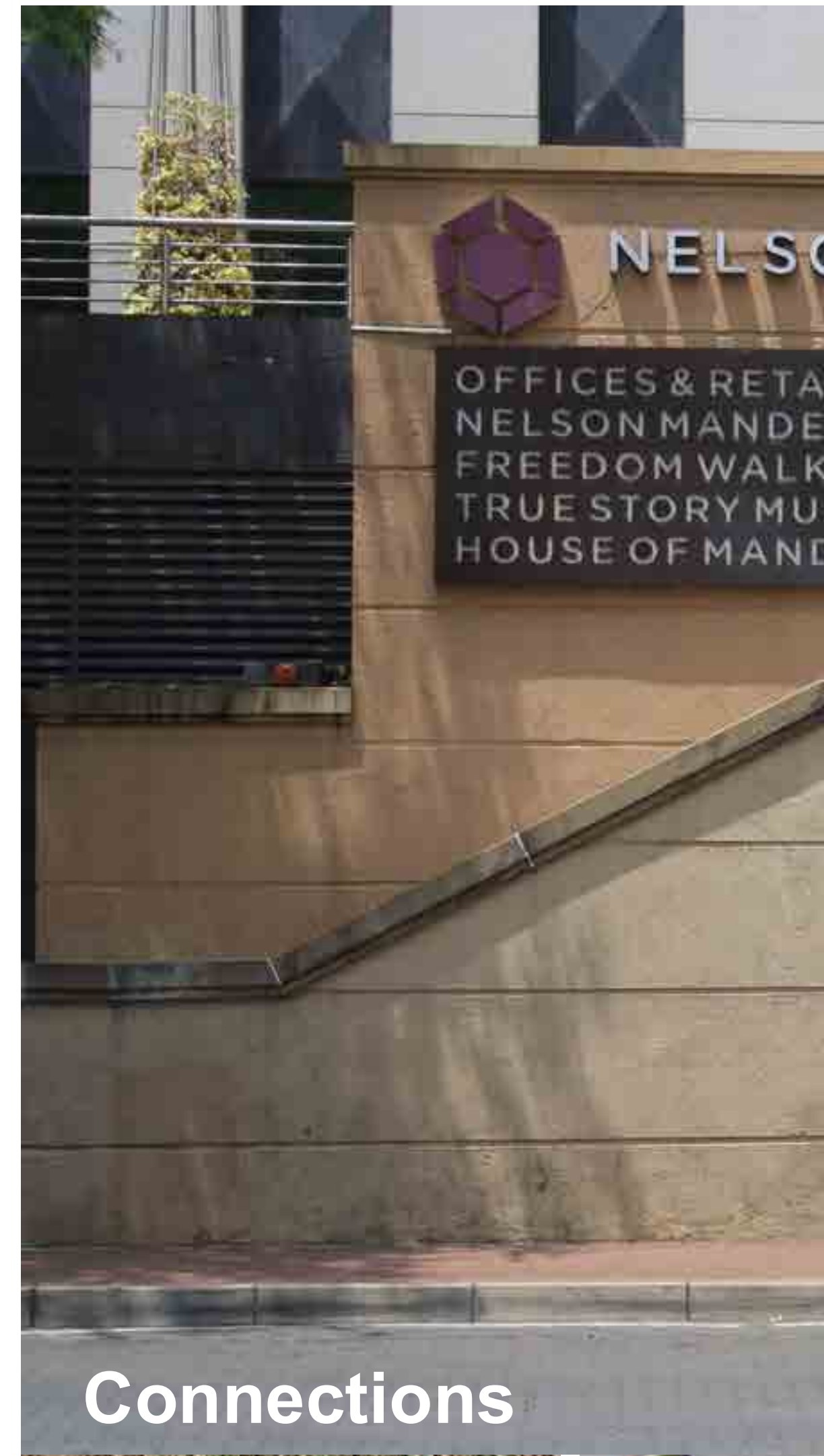
DISPLAYS OF SELF

- Changes people make to establish some place as their own, express who they are personally.

- **Personalisation:** Use environments to express their uniqueness and individuality such as furniture, desk clutter, display of collections.

- **Identification:** Environment are used to enable others to identify them more easily, such as street numbers, names.

- **Group Membership:** Display membership in formal religious, academic, fraternal, pollical, ethnic, cultural and professional groups.

Group Membership

Personalisation

Identification

PHYSICAL TRACES TO LOOK FOR

PUBLIC MESSAGES

- Changes such as posters and graffiti to communicate messages to a public audience.

- **Official:** Most common erected by institutions such as advertising signs, street signs.

- **Unofficial:** People communicating publicly about events, services or community letters.

- **Illegitimate:** Unplanned messages to the general public , seldom approved of such as graffiti.

Unofficial

Illegitimate

Official

VISUAL TRACES

SOURCE: ROBERT HARLAND

welcome signs, maps, brands

benches, decoration, commemorative plates

information panels, vistas, architectural structures, graphic details

play equipment, information graphics, warning signs, bollards, bins

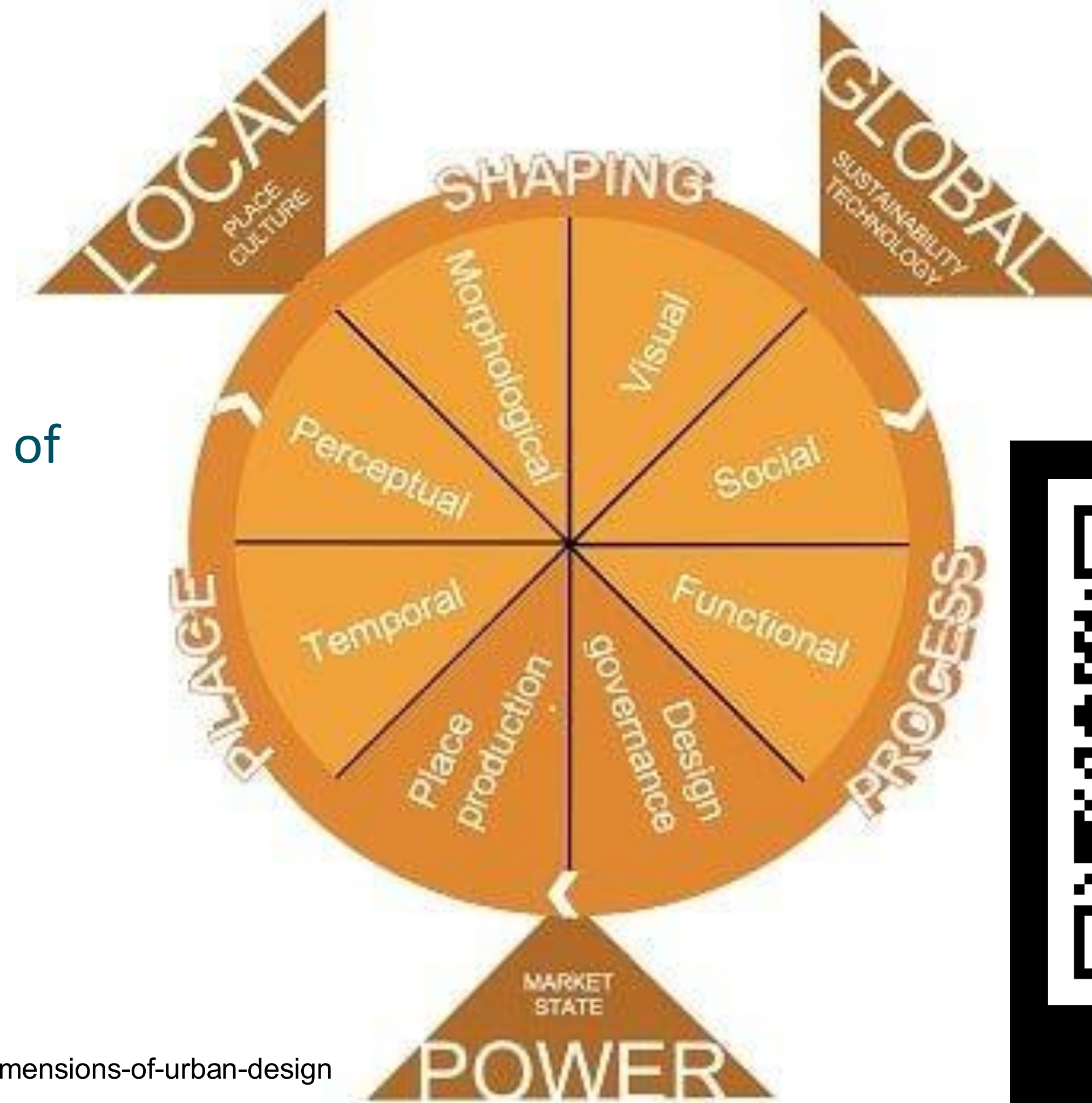sports markings and structures

railings, colour, shapes

temporary signs

OPPORTUNITIES

THIS METHOD CAN BE USED IN THE FOLLOWING DISCIPLINES

- Figure of Dimensions of Urban Design (Carmona, 2021)

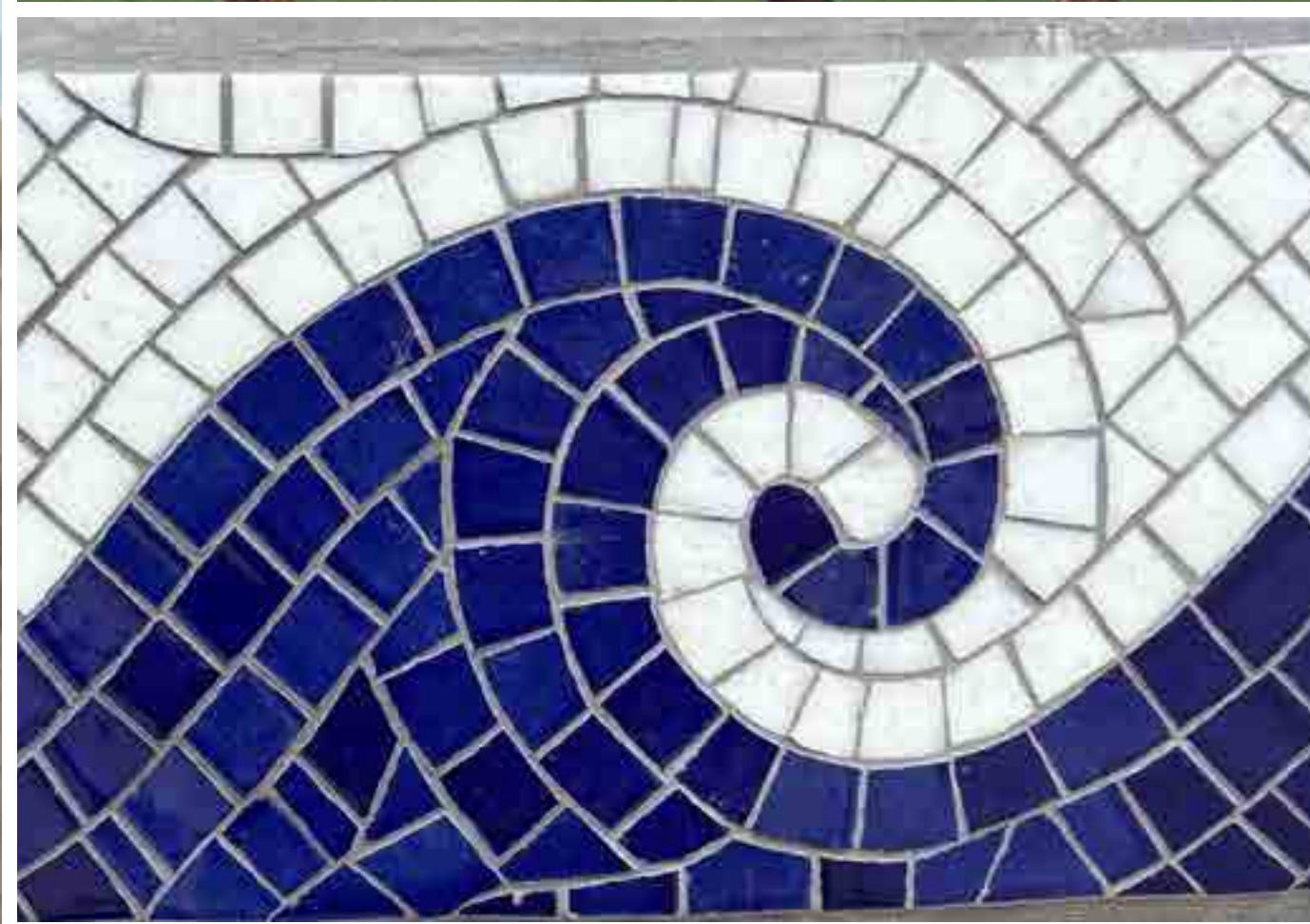- Physical traces can be explored from most of the dimensions in the urban environment.

Image Credit: Carmona (2021). Dimensions of urban design. [Image].
Available from: https://www.routledge.com/blog/article/exploring-the-evolving-dimensions-of-urban-design

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OTHER CURIOUS TRACES FOR ME

SURFING HERITAGE

GRAPHIC MEMORY

LAST THOUGHTS

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

- No human participants for observing physical traces. We work mostly in public places and avoid photographing people which limits the risk. Remember POPIA!

- Semi-public and private places needs gatekeeper permission.

- Human participants in observing environmental behaviour have more risk but provides complementary data.

TRUSTWORTHINESS

Use the qualitative trustworthiness aspects to support the academic rigour of the interpretations of the data from this method:

- Credibility
- Reliability
- Objectivity
- Confirmability

?

Questions in session
Email your questions to y.burger@lboro.ac.uk

THANK YOU

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References
Carmona,, M. 2021. Public Places Urban Spaces (3rd Ed). Routledge: London.
Zeisel, J 2006, Inquiry by design. W.W. Norton & Company Inc., New York.

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