I decided to take a walk in Google map. It's not a real walk. Here, walking is a metaphorical research method.

(A) Entry and Position: I entered Google Maps through Safari. Instinctively, I clicked on the location icon—the one that looks like a shooting target, not the blue arrow seen in mobile apps. To access the map, I needed to provide my location. I passed through Google's instruction windows, the Google settings window, and my MacBook's settings. Following its suggestion, I arrived at Chrome as the window through which I would walk. In the window, a prompt from Google popped up. With a simple rightward slide of a toggle, I successfully connected to this layer of the world—it recognized my location data. I became a small solid blue dot, surrounded by a glowing halo of the same blue. This was the starting point of my walk. Walking within the map isn't real walking. I always float—like a flying ghost—face down toward the ground. I'm restricted to movement along the Z-axis. There is a safe distance between me and the ground—I can never actually land. Out of habit, I treated myself as that attractive blue dot. Unlike the version on my phone, this map layer didn't include the translucent directional indicator. This was the first time I carefully observed these visual symbols. The little blue dot expanded and contracted like a jellyfish. When I clicked on my real physical location and chose "Directions," I was immediately pushed away—along the X-axis. Three blue dots appeared between me and my destination. As I zoomed in again along the X-axis, those blue dots became elongated ovals, multiplying from three to dozens. The blue dot at the origin was obscured by a white dot with a black outline. These blue dots took a detour to the end of the sidewalk and crossed the dark grey road (though the road wasn't visually that different). So how do we define "walking" within the map? This action means gliding across a smooth plane, parallel to the map layer, at the closest height above ground along the X-axis. The friction comes from the mouse and the cursor acting as a grabbing hand. I decided to abandon the blue dot.

(B) Visual Language in this map: I looked in three directions. The world inside this computer window was different from what I knew on my phone. I couldn't rotate the view. My "forward" direction was fixed, leaving me with a strange sensation—an inability to turn my head. I decided to go toward the area with a park. This choice came from my memory of the corresponding real space. On a green patch, a centered deep green label with a white border read: "Morland Mews Park." In real life, I never knew this park had a name. In fact, I never thought of it as a park—it just looked like a small open space, a few trees, and a bench. When I clicked on the park's name, the interface prompted me to enter another layer: Google Street View. But for now, I didn't want to leave this layer. I moved slightly in the opposite X direction and looked at the park from above: a light green rectangle, deeper green path-like shapes, and a touch of dark grey peeking through between the color blocks. I continued walking downward, following the areas marked with grey dots—I knew those indicated sidewalks. Interestingly, though I was floating in mid-air, I still chose to glide above the sidewalk. Experience allowed me to almost instantly align these visual cues with real-world knowledge. This particular intersection seemed narrower than in real life—was it? My trust in this map layer made me briefly doubt my own physical memory. But soon, the strangeness of other elements made me regard this world as a hyper-clean, overly-rational new perspective. At the intersection, a grey line appeared. Due to the safe distance, I couldn't see clearly what it was. These curbs were made up of straight segments, not curves. Some houses were light grey, others light yellow: the gallery's name was deep purple. I came to two overlapping houses. One of their corners extended into the road, and so did the one opposite. The road formed a rugged, sharp turn. Between No. 32 and No. 34 was a house with no visible number. A narrow, sharply pointed green triangle appeared on the sidewalk. I didn't know what it was until I looked across the road—it seemed a sliver of the park across the street had accidentally spilled into this gap. My finger accidentally slid across the trackpad, and I was suddenly launched toward the satellite view. I came back down the X-axis to the ground, but instead of heading back to the residential lanes, I decided to go straight to Granary Square. (C) I parachuted into Granary Square, sliding all the way to the bottom of the X-axis. On the plane of grey dots were three warm-grey rectangles. This grey was different from the grey of the buildings—within this world, grey was used with great subtlety. Out of habit, I looked in the direction of CSD. Like the gallery, it appeared in high-transparency light orange. Strangely, this color block evoked a contradiction—it felt inviting and open, yet I also felt shut out. I slid toward the canal. This area was quite complex. Green overlapped with stair-marking diagonal lines. The grey dots along the path were replaced by green. On the other side, the grey dot layer, dark grey, light grey, green, and diagonal line layers interwove. They awkwardly overlapped and exposed subtle seams between each other. It took me a while to figure out which section I was in. I kept connecting the map's symbols to the real world, to the point where I forgot I was floating in the air. How do I decide if a piece of ground is walkable within the map? Why do I instinctively stick to sidewalks? The pattern of the sidewalk dots varies in density depending on the zoom level—sparser when zoomed out. I passed through an uppermost pattern layer sitting atop a blue polygon. While gliding, I focused intently on these unnamed, layered, imperfectly fitted pieces. On the dark grey road surface, a row of arrows pointed in one direction. I stopped on a grey dot (in real life, this was a bridge) and looked down at the towpath—a green line slipping into the blue area, disappearing beneath the grey dot pattern.

(D)Disorientation: After walking for a while, I arrived at Harrier Street, where the sidewalk dots had vanished. Without sidewalks, I felt lost. I knew I could always retreat along the X-axis for a full view, but one key aspect of this walking practice was not to deliberately switch to the panoramic perspective. Was this area still walkable? How do you define a walkable path in a map? Is it the presence of grey dots, or the absence of closed outlines? My walking remained closely tied to my memories and experiences as a pedestrian. I remember certain moments when I followed the map with a sense of doubt. After lingering for a bit in the open grey zone, I spotted another sidewalk dead end. I crossed the grey line at the edge of the dead end—perhaps, in the real world, I had passed through a wall. Due to a brief pause of my finger, the Street View prompt appeared again. I had indeed just passed through a wall. I closed it. I walked diagonally, arriving at a crossroads. I was drawn to a green square across the street. What was it? I glided around the area, trying to find its name. The map showed "Jellicoe Garden." Out of curiosity, I clicked the name. Satellite imagery popped up. It looked entirely different from the previous world—low-res, messy—but the green mystery was solved: they were rectangular patches of vegetation. Compared to that, the two-dimensional map felt much more niche. I returned to the clean 2D layer. This time, something happened. Probably a browser issue—I could no longer glide close to the ground like before. My lowest X-axis position now hovered higher off the surface. Soon I realized that if I placed the mouse over the search bar or toolbar in the window and continued dragging, I could enlarge everything in the interface, along with the floating buttons for Restaurants, Hotels, and Recommended. The colorful Google logo slid out of view. I reached the end of a sidewalk. Why not try walking on the road? Even though there was no real danger, I still felt uneasy. While gliding on the dark grey layer, my speed increased. Soon, I saw a familiar shop name: Redemption Coffee. I knew I had returned to the starting point. I moved toward the empty, pale-orange layer. This color seemed to suggest the building was open, welcoming even, yet, somehow still made me feel excluded. In the middle of this orange layer was the label Granary Square (with the fountains), even though the actual spot was across the corner on those dark grey blocks.


Google Maps does not have permission to use your location
Find your current location in Google Maps
Change your default location settings
www.google.co.uk wants to
Allow while visiting the site
Allow this time
Google Chrome
Show Your Location Locations
Ring Rd
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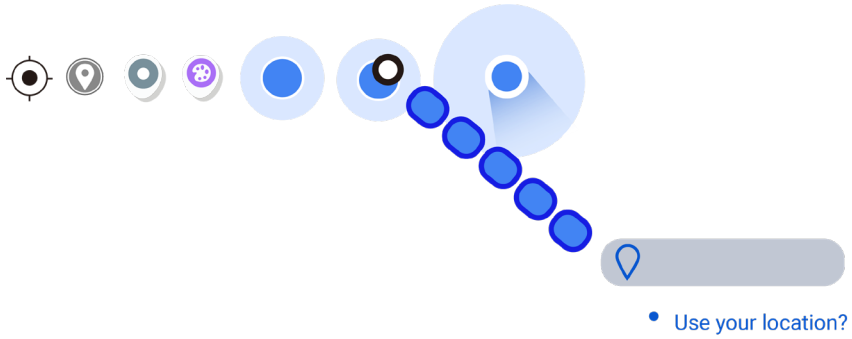

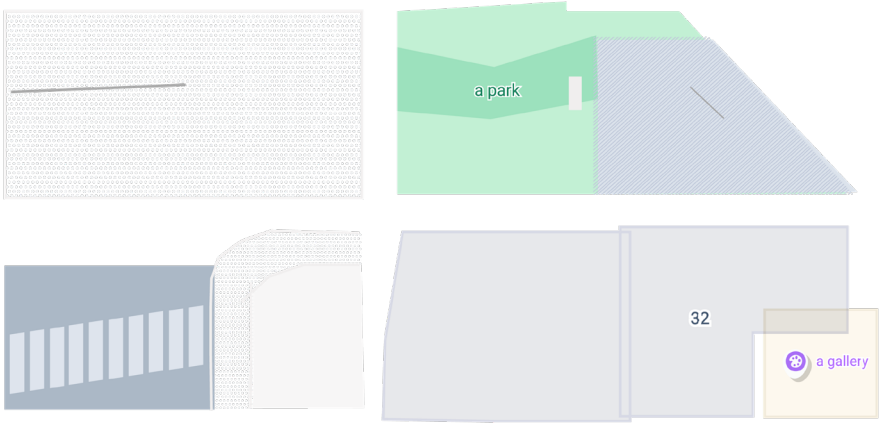

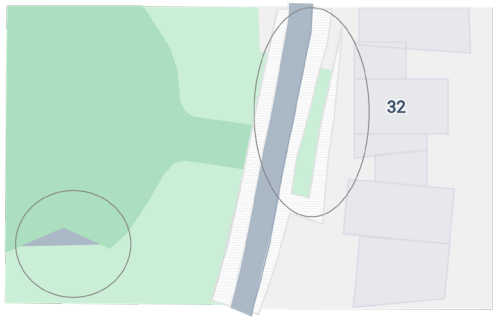

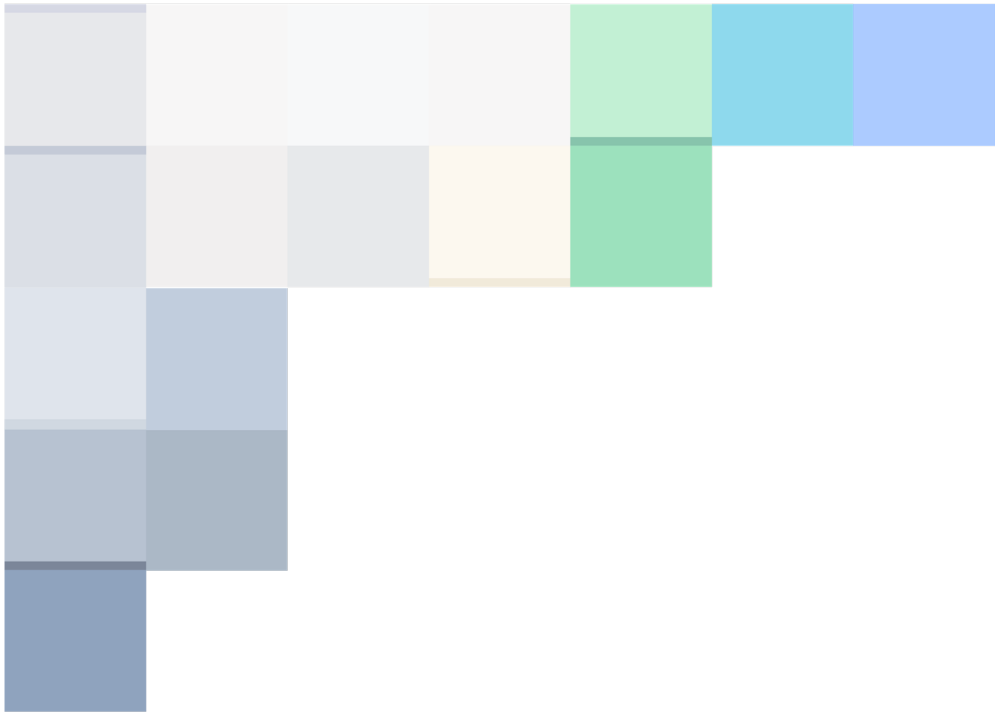

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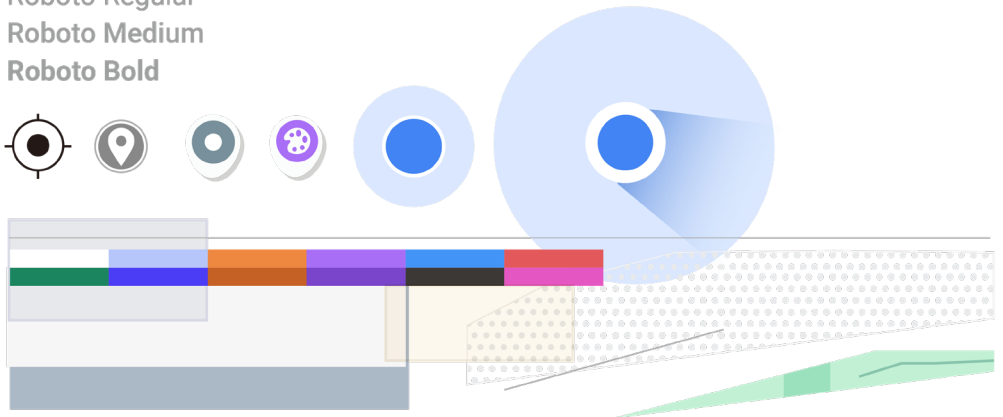

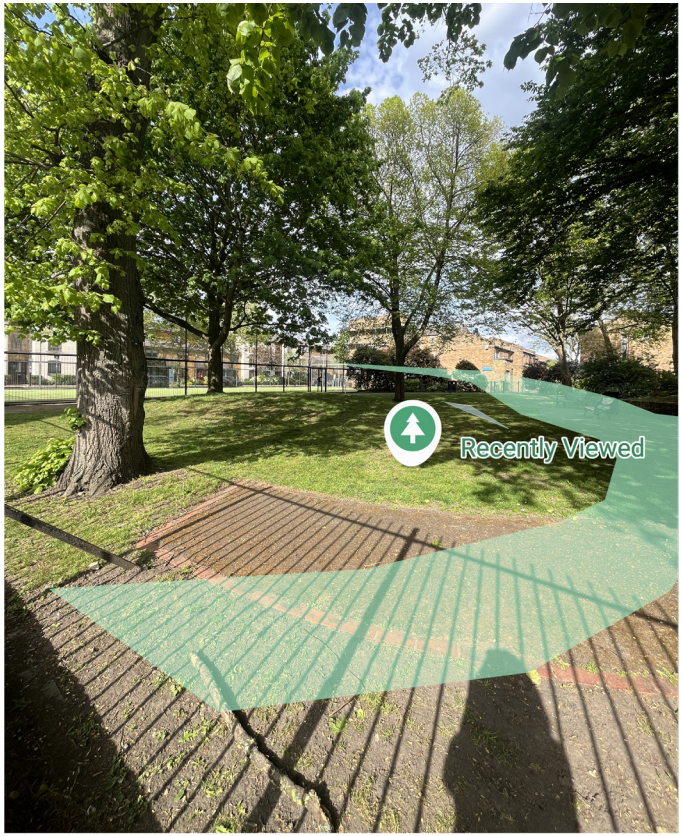
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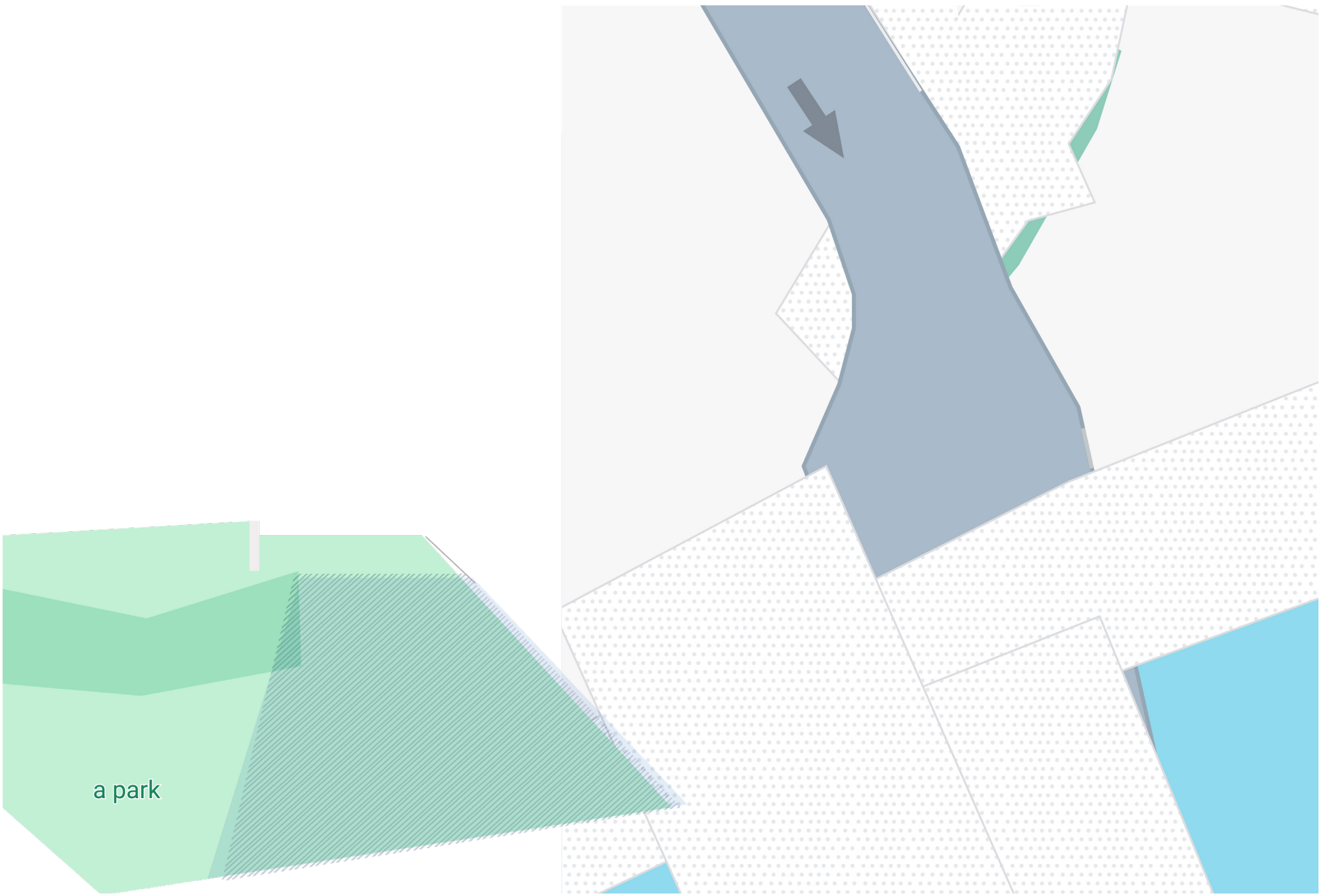
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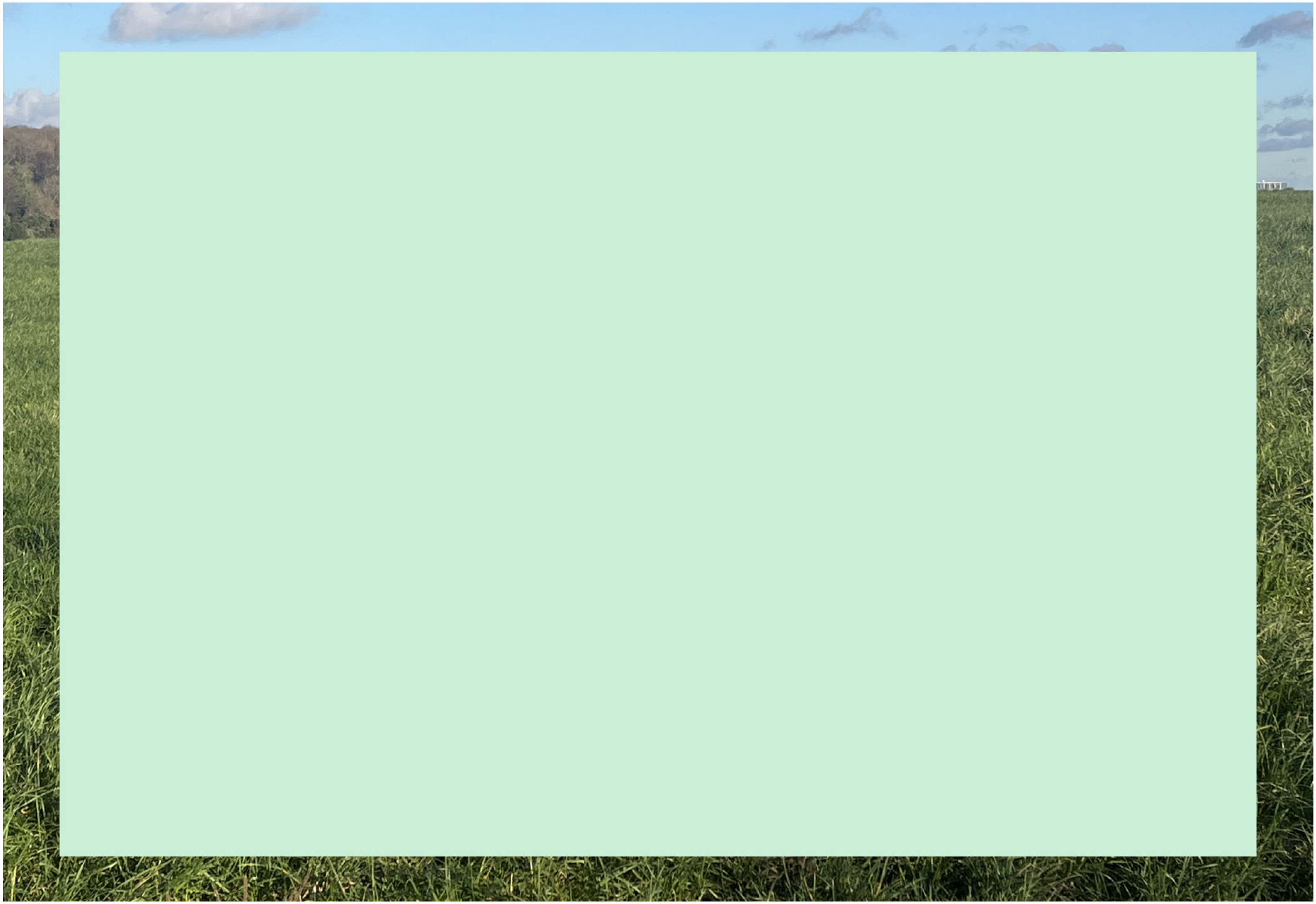
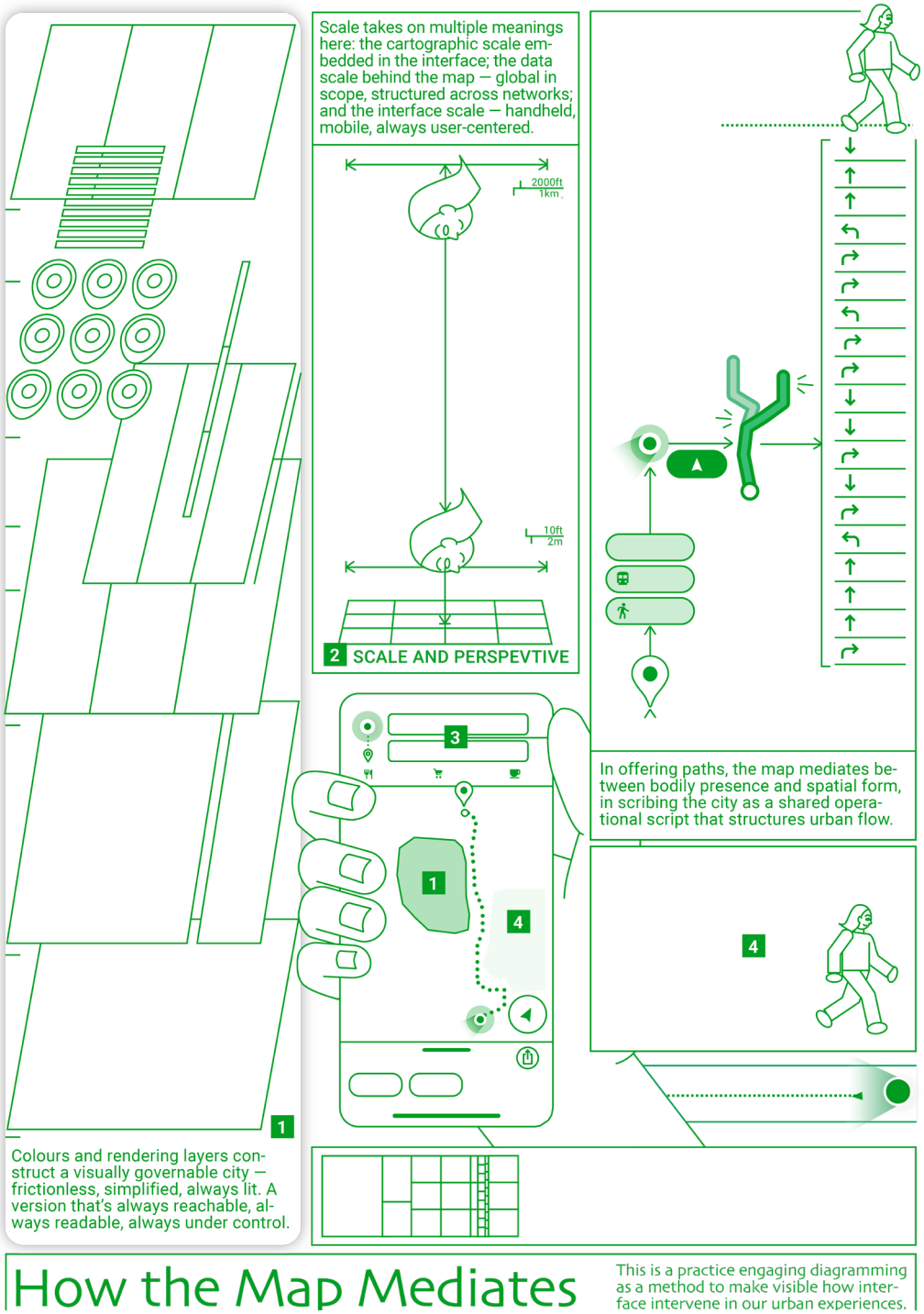
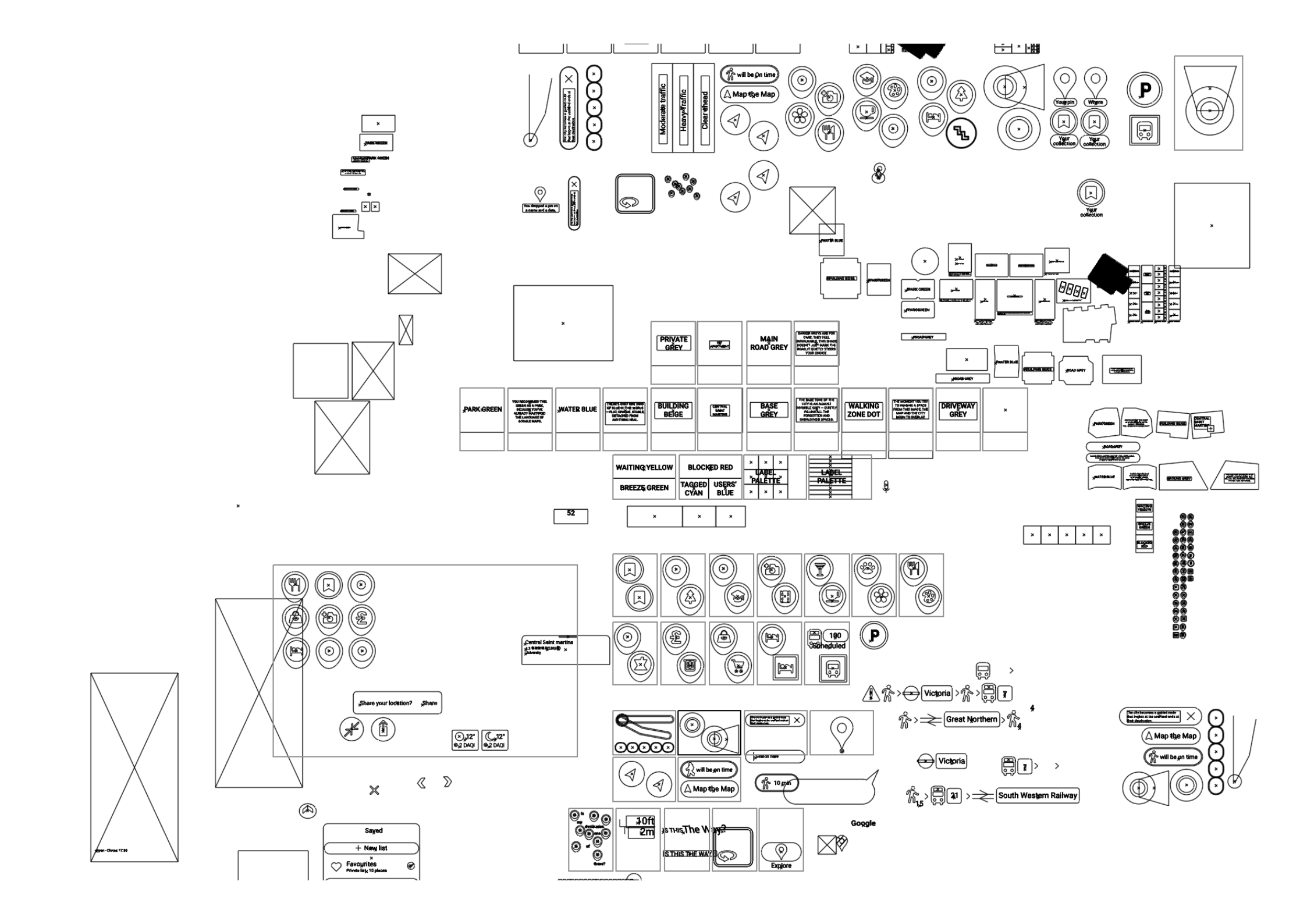



Scale takes on multiple meanings here: the cartographic scale embedded in the interface; the data scale behind the map — global in scope, structured across networks; and the interface scale — handheld, mobile, always user-centered.
2000ft
1km
10ft
2m
2 SCALE AND PERSPEVTIVE
In offering paths, the map mediates between bodily presence and spatial form, in scribing the city as a shared operational script that structures urban flow.
1
Colours and rendering layers construct a visually governable city — frictionless, simplified, always lit. A version that's always reachable, always readable, always under control.
How the Map Mediates
This is a practice engaging diagramming as a method to make visible how interface intervene in our urban experiences.


Our urban spatial experience is a dual exercise of reading the map language and verifying the physical space.
IS THIS The Way ?
10ft
2m
Start


Moderate traffic
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PARK GREEN
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BASE GREY
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BLOCKED RED
BREEZE GREEN
TAGGED CYAN
USERS' BLUE
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Share your location?
Share
Victoria
Great Northern
South Western Railway
Map the Map
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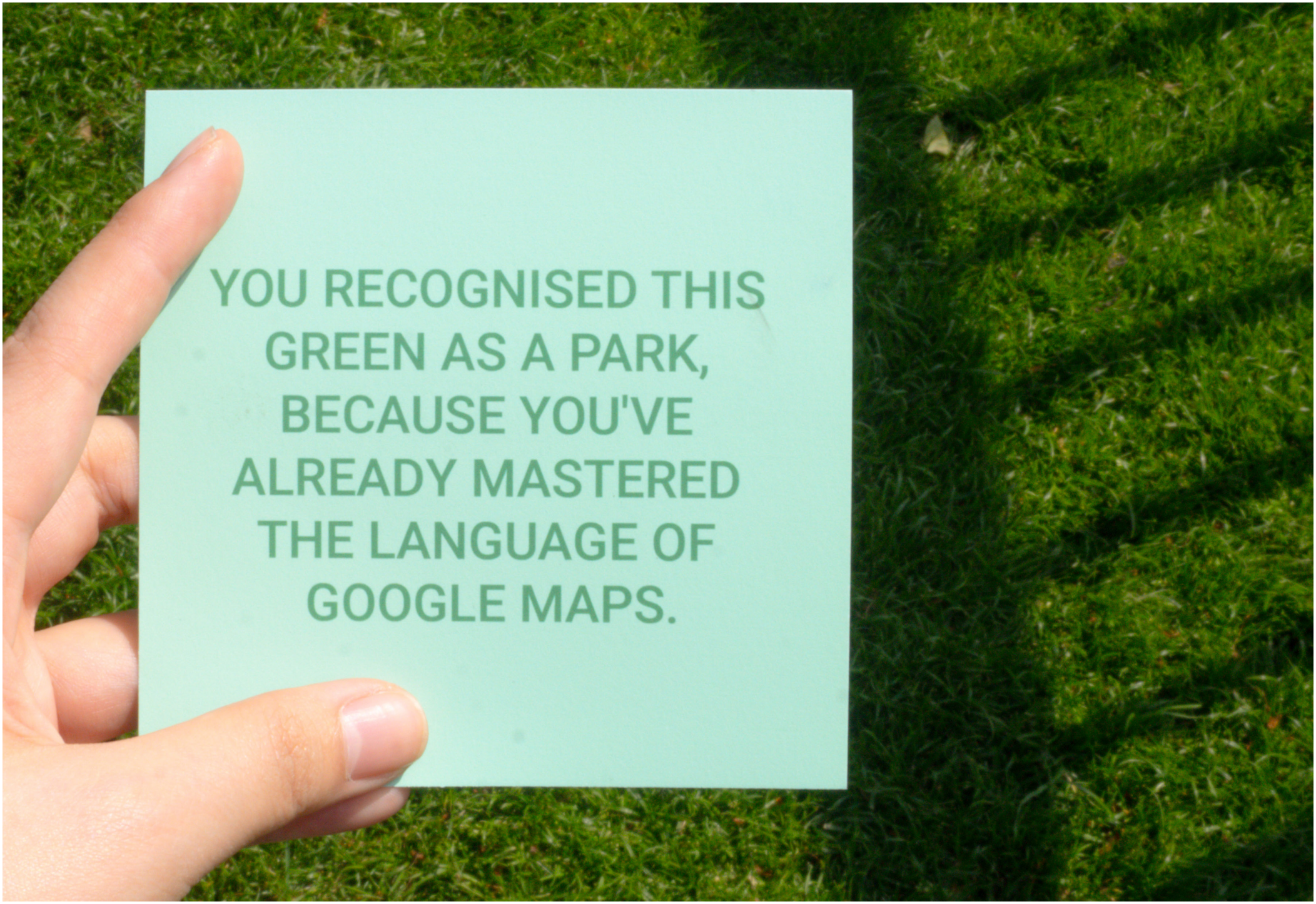
YOU RECOGNISED THIS
GREEN AS A PARK,
BECAUSE YOU'VE
ALREADY MASTERED
THE LANGUAGE OF
GOOGLE MAPS.