The State seems to have no control over the land market, since this would depend on the ‘invisible hand’ that regulates transactions between private agents. Analyzing two cases in Santiago in the 19th century, this text shows us, however, that it has not always been this way: through the creation of public parks the State did operate as a developer, encouraging an urban expansion that—for our current mindset— it should only regulate.

**Keywords** - park, city, real estate, Quinta Normal, Campo de Marte

During the 19th century, the city of Santiago grew explosively following State-driven public land operations. This is the thesis developed by Armando de Ramón (2000, 1985), who emphasizes the State’s role as a development agent by shaping the city’s growth, legitimizing and setting the course of its extension through visible works. According to the author, while settlement areas are given to private initiatives, streets, pipes and especially parks are the public contribution to the real estate business.

In Santiago, fiscal land acquisitions for the Quinta Normal (1841) and the Campo de Marte (1843) are accomplished two years apart, adding a potential public space extension equivalent almost to the actual populated area at that time. While none of these included the promenades as content, in practice, they did functioned as public space. In addition, as noted by the historian, being located approximately 1,300 meters away from the city’s borders, both sites left large areas—once peripheral lands—in an outstanding central position. The new neighborhoods developed as a result of the Quinta and the Campo’s position almost doubled the city’s urban land. The 1841 plan by Herbage shows that Santiago barely reached the 370 hectares. The Quinta and Yungay...
neighborhoods added 317 hectares to the urban fabric, and the Campo de Marte—only with its projection towards the Alameda and the Zanjón de la Aguada—another 216. In other words, more than 530 hectares of tangible urban possibilities were added. In this sense, no land operation, private or public, would have again the proportional scale of what was traded between 1841 and 1843.

Public space, which is theoretically a restraint on urban sprawl by preserving land for green areas, proved to enhance real estate development in Santiago.¹ The same De Ramon (1985)—in deeds and subdivision dates of the surrounding properties—corroborated the untimely reaction of private agents to the operations regarding the Quinta Normal and the Campo de Marte with its further adaptation as Cousiño Park. In 1841, east of Quinta Normal, the Yungay neighborhood began its subdivision and, although this operation lasted for over forty years, a considerable amount of transactions were closed between 1842 and 1847, almost immediately after the Quinta was opened. In 1873, 19 property transfers north of the Cousiño Park were recorded, all of them made one year after the park opened.

Was this State’s development agency a deliberate action? As it will be demonstrated below, although De Ramon’s thesis cannot be confirmed as a deliberate speculation in the case of the Quinta Normal, there are indeed facts that confirm it in the case of the Campo de Marte.

THE QUINTA NORMAL AND THE YUNGAY VILLITA
The Quinta Normal was as filled with purposes as surrounded by failures. Conceived as a device to modernize agriculture, it was several things at once: acclimatization garden, agricultural laboratory, preceptors’ school, model farm, museum, and exhibition center. With great faith in an agricultural economy, the “homeland progress” (Sada de Carlos, 1851) would be there corroborated. However, during its first decades the Quinta was unable to fulfill the given tasks. Its functional indeterminacy, public vocation, and plans of an English garden as arboretum would consolidate it, at least in Santiago’s imaginary, as a promenade.

Since its formation in 1838, the Sociedad de Agricultura i Beneficencia [Society of Agriculture and Charity] assumed

¹ For the sense given to these terms, see Adrián Gorelik (1998) in La grilla y el parque, studying similar contemporary processes in the city of Buenos Aires.
the task of creating this initiative. As a civil organization driven by volunteers, its own bureaucracy wore out the initial energies and the Quinta Normal project was not launched until four years later, period spent mainly in finding a suitable ground.

Before being placed next to Matucana Avenue, the idea of the Quinta Normal wandered around a dozen of sites, many of them properties owned by partners and proposed from within the Society for its purchase, which may have tainted the selection criteria. Hence, the wide and varied range of sites dilutes the hypothesis of a deliberate plot for generating urban land. Indeed, some land proposals were far from town and, had they prospered, they would have had no connection with the city until late in the 20th century. Still, the Society’s proceedings were not methodical in stating the reasons for rejecting the proposals, occasionally mentioning the poor quality of the soil, the inappropriate extension or the distance. However, for each alternative all plans to complete the project were mobilized and, as if each were definitive, the enthusiasm for acquiring new seeds, plants and artifacts, that had no place to be stored, increased.

The first site considered belonged to Joaquin Gandarillas Aránguiz, corresponding to the Chacarilla de Macul. At the same time, the Government offered the land of the obsolete Gunpowder Factory, located then in El Salto (Millán, 2001). A third site was offered near the "Mapocho Promenade", probably among the fields of current Providencia Street alongside the Alameda del Tajamar. Other possibilities were: a site by the Casa de Huérfanos, perhaps part of the Portales family properties; another belonging to Mr. Pedro Francisco Lira in Ollería Street; the Quinta de Aeta located at Alameda and Matucana (suggested by the Government); the land of Francisco de Castro next to the San Borja Women’s Hospital, south of Alameda; the estate of Domingo Eyzaguirre Arechavala, at the far south of the city; the Quinta de Santo Tomas suggested by the Government on the Ñuñoa road; and, the property of a Mr. Vidal, located about seven kilometers southeast of Alameda. The search continued for more than two years.

In 1840, the offers approached the definitive site, returning to the Quinta de Aeta. At the time, Pedro Dejean was commissioned a conditioning program that, since it failed, turned the attention towards a land that belonged to Miguel Portales at the heart of current Yungay neighborhood. The latter was soon discarded in favor of the final location: the site

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2 Art. 1º of the Statutes recorded on May 20, 1838 and published in October 1838, El Agricultor, bimonthly newspaper published by the Sociedad Chilena de Agricultura, N° 1. Volume I: Years 1838, 1839 and 1840. (Santiago: Imprenta de la Opinión, c1840).

3 The discussion about potential lands is documented in successive proceedings ranging from August 23, 1838 until February 15, 1841, when it is stated that the deed has already been signed. Actas de la Sociedad Chilena de Agricultura e Beneficencia. Archivo Nacional Histórico (AHH), Rare Books v.24, Part N°42; 233-304.

4 Current Portugal Street.

5 Society’s first president.

6 Likely the Quinta de San Agustín in Calera de Tango or some other property that could be obtained after the founding of San Bernardo.
of José Diego Portales. The land was worth 4750 pesos and the transaction was formalized on February 3rd, 1841.7 At the same time, the naturalist Claudio Gay8 was asked to develop a conditioning plan, which was presented on February 22nd, 1841 and published in El Agricultor [The Farmer].

7. Sesiones de los Cuerpos Legislativos de la República de Chile (1843) / Session of the Chamber of Deputies, October 20th, 1843. Recovered from wikisource.org on March 24, 2015.
8. There is nothing on the records to confirm Gay’s role as the undisputed candidate to design the Quinta’s layout. The operation to seek and assess the land was in charge of various partners and marked by a lengthy frenzy for settling the issue. If the site on the Quinta de Aeta had prospered, the plan for the model farm would have been in charge of the architect Pedro Dejean. Gay designs the plan for the Quinta shortly before leaving Chile and although the Society expresses its utmost gratitude, there was no particular interest shown until then in his work.
In the naturalist’s proposal the Quinta was surrounded by a high, whitewashed wall and had its main entrance on the road to Valparaíso, which “would allow the traveler to take a passing glance over the whole extent of such beautiful and useful establishment” (Gay, 1841:2). The assertion made sense, since the absence of Matucana Avenue or the Yungay neighborhood turned the main connection of the Quinta with the city to its northern flank through the existing road. In Gay’s plan, based on the matrix of the Jardin des Plantes, agricultural experiments unfolded narrowly in the arabesques of the four northern quadrants. A greenhouses area detached these plots from the acclimatization garden that, in the form of an English park, occupied a third of the land’s extension.

Leopold Perrot, who came from the French school of Grignon and was the establishment’s first director, took office in October 1843 and was quick to dismiss his compatriot’s ideas. The acclimatization garden turned the land useless for agricultural experiments, to the point of considering selling the Quinta to buy a new, larger field that made a model farm possible, an “idea certainly much more useful.”9 It was neither the Sociedad de Agricultura nor the government who stopped this initiative but the land market itself, which made it impossible to find an extensive and affordable property within

five kilometers from the Plaza de Armas [Santiago’s center point]. Meanwhile, Gay’s garden received an unacceptable purchase offer.¹⁰

Thus, Perrot had to ensure the necessary modifications to operate in the estate. Among them, the construction of an iron entrance and a tree-lined access avenue facing Catedral Street, which was completed in 1845. Thus, the initial north-south axis proposed by Gay was changed and a connection between the existing city and the layout of a new neighborhood was reinforced.

At the same time, on the land enclosed between the Quinta and the city the development of Yungay neighborhood began. According to De Ramon (2000), in 1842 four companies were formed to proceed with the selling and development of the property belonging to the heirs of the family Portales. The extensive process, which lasted until 1884, resulted in its characteristic morphological heterogeneity. Some of the sites were sold on credit, which meant middle class access to property.¹¹ In that sense, it was pointed out as a modernization example that also sought to be replicated in rural land. Yungay neighborhood residents were largely related to the Quinta due to their jobs, being the dwelling place of intellectuals, naturalists and geologists such as Sarmiento, Domeyko and Pissis. In fact, the institution’s third director, Luis Sada de Carlos, would use the locality of “Yungai” when signing letters and documents issued from the Quinta Normal.

Founded around its square, the “villita de Yungai” [Yungai’s little village] had a satellite existence for quite sometime, and only ended up merging with the city’s founding center in late 1870s. As shown in the Castagnola plan (1854), it will not be the

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square but the access to the Quinta on Catedral Street what will define the form of its extension to the east. The same plan shows the concentration of the different institutions related to the modernizing project: the Quinta Normal, the Asilo del Salvador, the Escuela Normal [Teachers’ College] and the Escuela de Artes y Oficios [School of Arts and Crafts]. As noted by Vicuña Mackenna, “Yungay neighborhood is like a sanctuary of charity and work” (Vicuña Mackenna, 1856b: 396).

**THE CAMPO DE MARTE**

Vicente Pérez Rosales (1886) eloquently highlighted the sterility and barrenness that the land south of the Cañada showed at the dawn of the Republic. He agrees with Vicuña Mackenna (1856a): the moors of southern Santiago were reached by the water from the Maipo river only in the 1820s, transforming the deserted landscape that was justly known as ‘pampilla’ [little pampas]. On this shapeless and barren wasteland, portrayed by Rugendas and Charton de Treville, the Army outlined a Champ de Mars. However, regular lively civil recreation in the area already existed before the military parade that largely marked the place’s symbolism.

Overlapping the undefined vacant space, the boundaries of two adjoining properties were drawn: El Conventillo and La Pampilla (the latter shared its name with that of the entire area). The first, originally owned by the O’Higgins family, was surrounded by the current streets Santa Rosa, San Diego, Manuel Antonio Matta and Zanjón (De Ramón, 1985), and would later give its name to one of the suburbs most challenged by Vicuña Mackenna’s transformation plan. José Miguel Carrera already describes the use of El Conventillo as barracks in 1814,¹² moving to State’s ownership in 1834 (De

¹² José Miguel Carrera’s Military Journal: Chapters ix and x. Recovered from wikisource.org on March 25, 2015.
Ramón, 1985). On September 19th, 1830 a troop review in El Conventillo to commemorate Independence was performed for the first time. This was presumably the first public expression of the Army in the southern wastelands, which, starting from the following year, would be ritualized by president José Joaquín Prieto as a battle reenactment (Peralta, 2007).

Meanwhile, the Army tried to modernize its instruction with a Military Academy and sought a place to settle on Santiago’s outskirts. The extension of El Conventillo was insufficient for the exercises, so the War Minister José Santiago Aldunate developed in 1840 the plan for establishing a training arena on neighboring sites (Barrientos, 1944). The idea was so embedded that, even without clear boundaries, the place was already designated by the name of Campo de Marte [Champ de Mars].

Considering the Quinta Normal process as a precedent, the Parliament resisted the idea that the Government should again spend on the purchase of large portions of land. In November 1842 the Ministry of War asked for the approval of 73,000 pesos for the acquisition of a Champ de Mars. The conservative politician and former Finance Minister, Mariano Egaña, indicated that the institution had already been granted a large sum for the purchase of El Conventillo, to which Aldunate argued its uselessness and the need to sell it to buy a larger field. The properties to be acquired had an area that exceeded what was needed for the Champ, going from the Alameda to the Zanjón de la Aguada. It was argued that “the Government can easily sell and with benefits those grounds that were no longer needed.”

This was the real estate transaction that would originate the neighborhoods Dieciocho and República, and which Egaña resisted, not only because of the questioned urgency of a Champ

13 Actas de la Sociedad Chilena de Agricultura i Beneficencia, 19 October 1840. Rare Books, V.24 n. 42. A.N.H.
14 Sesiones de los Cuerpos Legislativos de la República de Chile, 1842. Senate’s session on November 2, 1842. Recovered from wikisource.org on March 25, 2015.
de Mars, but also because of the State's participation in the real estate business: "the Government is not and it should not be a speculator in that sense."\(^{15}\)

Despite Egaña’s opposition, the project was approved. The debate confirms that the thesis by De Ramon (1985) about the State’s role as a real estate agent deliberately operates in this case. The symbolic relevance of the place and, of course, the 19th-century obstinacy to provide Santiago of new promenades added up to the business opportunity. The Parliament’s Finance Committee\(^ {16}\) argued for the haste to anticipate land speculation and, thus, reserve the empty Champ for military exercises and citizen recreation.

Finally, the State authorized the acquisition of the southern end of the Alameda de los Monos’s projection (current Blanco Encalada street), consisting of four longitudinal lots situated between the Alameda de la Cañada and the Zanjón, and between Padura alley and Ugarte street. Acquisitions are legalized between 1842 and 1843 (De Ramón, 1985). Curiously, the Military Academy was established that same year in the eastern periphery, in De la Ollería street, and the first facilities that moved to the Champ were disciplinary ones. The military complex would only acquire some status with the services built after 1858.

According to Pablo Barrientos (1944), the urban layout in charge of army officers would take four years to be completed and would have also involved Dieciocho street, an axis later established as one of Santiago’s finest new neighborhoods. So, although the military only acquired the southern portion of the property, the operation had the intended impact on the southern area of the Alameda as a whole, providing roads for private neighborhoods. As anticipated, the Champ de Mars did not occupy the full extent of the property purchased, surrounded by four lanes that would later become Tupper, Rondizzoni, Viel and Beauchef streets. In 1849 the plots surrounding the field were sold, preserving only those needed to build the Artillery barracks.

The plans show that the operation remained in a peripheral condition for a long time and the Campo de Marte is not mentioned for over a decade. Only by 1872, when the esplanade became a park, the new neighborhoods had a definite boost. The idea is first mentioned by Vicuña Mackenna (1854:134) who envisions "a grove of olive trees at least, in our pampa." Inspired by London terraces, he imagined an architectural and commercial revolution by reproducing in Chile those palatial types (Vicuña Mackenna, 1857). In his view, such an idea should not be developed on the "pestilent" Yungay, but rather looking for better hygienic conditions amid the cool breezes from the south. Thus, the plan for the Cousiño Park and the Army neighborhood is developed in

\(^{15}\) Mariano Egaña, ibid.

its fundamental aspects before 1860. According to Martínez (1973) it will be in 1858, with Vicuña Mackenna in his second exile, when Montt’s government commissions the Director of the Quinta Normal, Manuel de Arana Bórica, the first plan to transform the Campo de Marte in a forested promenade.

A PLANNING STRATEGY
It may seem questionable for current economic and political ethics for the State to act as a development agent, using urban land to finance the treasury as well as leading public operations to profit from its properties. However, this was the tenor of the changes that would be accelerated during the last three decades of the 19th century, constantly using public space as its singular instrument. Peripheral operations, extensive and ambitious, extended the city’s boundaries and defined its growth direction. Some did so tacitly –as the Camino de Cintura [Beltway] and the Santa Lucia Hill– while others were explicit –as the Parque Forestal [Forestal Park]. The channeling of the Mapocho river along that area was openly presented by the mayor as a “brilliant business for the municipality” (Vicuña Mackenna, 1872:9).

But by generating urban land, the state became a public drive for private investment, ensuring a city with superabundant public space. Equally, the new urban fabric anticipated future development and made it possible –at least theoretically– to have a notion of the city as a defined and controlled object. Until the end of the century, this planning strategy maintains the city’s form while plans show the Campo de Marte –later called Cousiño Park– in an outskirts condition. Some did so tacitly –as the Camino de Cintura [Beltway] and the Santa Lucia Hill– while others were explicit –as the Parque Forestal [Forestal Park].

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