

# Facing the conflict between capital and metropolis: the 1925 Plan for Buenos Aires

*Enfrentando o conflito entre capital e metrópole:  
o Plano de 1925 para Buenos Aires*

*Afrontando el conflicto entre capital y metrópolis:  
el Plan de 1925 para Buenos Aires*

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## Abstract

After its federalization (1880) to become the capital of a pacified nation, Buenos Aires first mayor led a series of reforms to leave behind the colonial *gran aldea*. Forty years after, his son, the new president emerged from an expanded electoral base, promoted a new urban reform to face the difficult coexistence of the Capital within a metropolis that had ten folded its population by politicized and unstable immigrants. This early example of "scientific" urbanism relied on the concept of fusion – alluding to the vitality of an art resulting from the convergence of old traditions and new craftsmen – to reconcile in its plan the demands of representation of the political power and the traditional forces with the effervescent suburban working-class barrios.

**Keywords:** City; Metropolis; Topography; Physiognomy; Martín Noel.

## Resumo

Após sua federalização (1880) como preço para se tornar a capital de uma nação pacificada, o primeiro prefeito de Buenos Aires liderou uma série de reformas para deixar para trás a grande vila colonial. Quatro décadas depois, seu filho, presidente que emergiu de uma base eleitoral ampliada, promoveu um novo plano para enfrentar a difícil convivência com uma metrópole que decuplicou sua população com imigrantes politizados e instáveis. Assim, este exemplo inaugural de urbanismo "científico" apoiou-se no conceito de fusão – concebido para aludir à vitalidade de uma arte resultante da convergência de velhas tradições e novos artesãos – para conciliar em seu plano as demandas de representação do poder político e a latifundiários tradicionalistas da cidade com as efervescentes formações suburbanas dos setores populares.

**Palavras-Chave:** Cidade; Metrôpole; Topografia; Fisionomia; Martín Noel.

## Resumen

Luego de su federalización (1880) como precio para asumir como capital de una nación pacificada, el primer intendente de Buenos Aires lideró una serie de reformas para dejar atrás la *gran aldea* colonial. Cuatro décadas después, su hijo, presidente surgido de una base electoral ampliada, promovió un nuevo plan para afrontar la difícil convivencia con una metrópolis que había decuplicado su población con inmigrantes politizados e inestables. Así, este inaugural ejemplo de urbanismo "científico" se apoyó en el concepto de fusión -pergeñado para aludir a la vitalidad de un arte resultante de la convergencia de viejas tradiciones y nuevos artífices- para conciliar en su planta las demandas de representación del poder político y los propietarios tradicionalistas de la ciudad con las efervescente de formaciones suburbanas de los sectores populares.

**Palabras clave:** Ciudad; Metrôpoli; Topografía; Fisionomía; Martín Noel.

## 1 Introduction

This paper addresses the sequence of two consecutive urban proposals for the Federal Capital of Argentina settled in the already powerful city of Buenos Aires. Although these proposals did not achieve the spectacular and ambitious range of planning projects for new town capital cities developed during the twentieth century in recently decolonized nations, largely because they were developed eight decades after the successful Argentinian independence from Spain, they reveal two interesting features. On the one hand, they show how they coped with divergent demands in the urban arena: the claims of federal power along those already settled by local power, and later, the economic and social demands of a metropolis with the representative needs of a capital city. On the other hand, and taking up one of the axes of the *First TOPOS International Seminar: Landscapes of Power: Reconsidering the Twentieth Century Capital Cities*, these projects reveal the relevant place that landscape – a compound of geography and history, as an equivalent natural force – can assume as a medium of Urbanism.

Two urban plans are discussed. The one of a New Buenos Aires, promoted after the "federalization" and artificial extraction of its urban area from the jurisdiction of the most important province, and the one carried out forty years later by a Building Aesthetics Commission to provide the Capital Federal with a system of public spaces in accordance with the progress and the new international position of a country that, at the same time, faced the conflicts linked to its extraordinary demographic growth through foreign immigration and the enlargement of political representation.

Neither of these initiatives has the fascinating geometric simplicity of a new capital city project. Both start from the strategic acknowledgement of the pre-existences, natural and built, and of the social and economic interests imprinted in the urban space. Both bring into play the tools of Urbanism as a new discipline that gradually leaves behind the apparent simplicity of some architectural compositional devices applied on a larger scale, to integrate scientific fundamentals and new means of intervention. Urbanism is no longer focused on the formal improvement of some urban scenarios, but on the "cure" of cities torn by conflict and congestion, unable to face the productive, technological, demographic, cultural, even sanitary and political changes, at the turn of the century. These two urban designs for Buenos Aires do not project a new society over an apparently empty ground; rather they promote some actions, limited and fragmented in their rendering on a plan, but capable of altering the urban structure and fostering new rules of coexistence and association for the multiple agents, movements and practices converging on its soil.

We are not referring here to the fate of a paper new capital city whose design and destiny amaze us. Instead, we are interested in recording the swaying of political projects that, while recognizing and affecting multiple interests, attempt to define a clearer and more effective power board, capable of representing a nation but also of mediating in a convulsive metropolitan condition. In these urban projects, landscape and history are used as arguments and as instruments.

That is the reason why we are interested in the *Proyecto orgánico para la urbanización del Municipio. El Plano Regulador y de Reforma de la Capital Federal* [Organic Project for the urbanization of the Municipality. The Regulatory and Reform Plan of the Federal Capital], carried out by a Building Aesthetics Commission (Intendencia Municipal, 1925). It is a conscious attempt to conciliate a representative city and a metropolis, to fuel their

mutually stimulating fusion through the urban/ landscape project of a cosmopolitan beacon that speaks of the Nation but recognizes the popular, economic and productive sectors of Argentinian "Goliath's head" (Martínez Estrada, 1940) by linking a sequence of civic oases to the polycentric network of scenarios for popular life. It must be understood in relation to the previous project of the New Buenos Aires as a "permanent capital" that sought to erase the main traces of the colonial Gran Aldea, while confirming its condition of a small and centralized city where the seats of the new federal institutions had to find a place.

Regarding the notions of capital and metropolis, we take as a reference Anne Querrien's (1986) very recurrent distinction. Capital as a static formation, whose objective is the concentration of power, making visible the state apparatus and its hierarchies, and setting values that usually refer to a common past, in order to organize people, goods and energies of a territory to which it is necessarily linked. Metropolis as a network formation where resistance to the circulation of goods and people is reduced to a minimum, particularly suitable for the coexistence of populations of varied origins to whom similar opportunities are promised, and whose objective is expansion and experimentation.

## 2 The new Buenos Aires

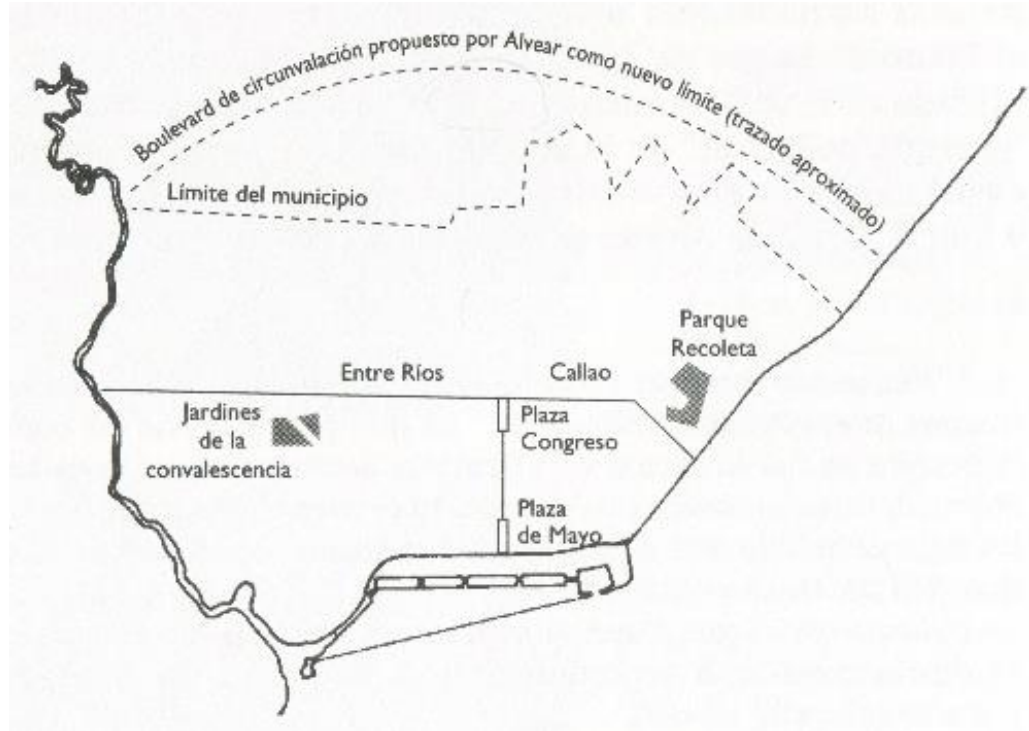
On December 6, 1880, after the bloody battle for Buenos Aires with more than 2,500 dead and wounded, the decree of "federalization" of the city put an end to almost seven decades of civil wars. It tried to settle the "capital issue" in a republic that had begun to take shape around 1810 and was the result of a pact, full of upsets and shifting alliances, between quasi-feudal territories that had once belonged to the Viceroyalty of the Rio de la Plata and at that time made up the different provinces.

This designation of Buenos Aires as Federal Capital gives rise to a series of debates on how to adapt the existing city to its condition of permanent seat of the State authorities. They can be synthesized in the dispute between London or Washington, a big or a small city (Shmidt, 2012, p. 114-116). The three coexisting powers that play a part in these debate are the national one represented by President Julio A. Roca, the provincial one represented by the new governor Dardo Rocha who declines his interference after the project of the new capital in La Plata, and the local one that we synthesize in the initiatives of Torcuato de Alvear, president of the Municipal Commission and first Mayor since May 1883.

Simplifying the processes, we can conclude that what Alvear promotes is the consolidation of a small, centralized city on the traces of the old colonial grid, although erasing the appearance and the urban logics of that Gran Aldea (Figure 1). Within its reinforced limits, he seeks to concentrate the seats of federal power and its administrative organisms, the squares and the school networks and, in its borders, the terminal stations of the railway companies that connect Buenos Aires with the rest of the country.

His initiatives aim to supply order, urban order within the French regularizing tradition (Gorelik, 1998, p. 87): an order understood as symmetric organization, clarity of limits, and purification of colonial traces and disruptive or unhygienic activities.

**Figure 1:** Scheme of Mayor Torcuato de Alvear's main urban reforms.



Source: Gorelik (1998, p. 93).

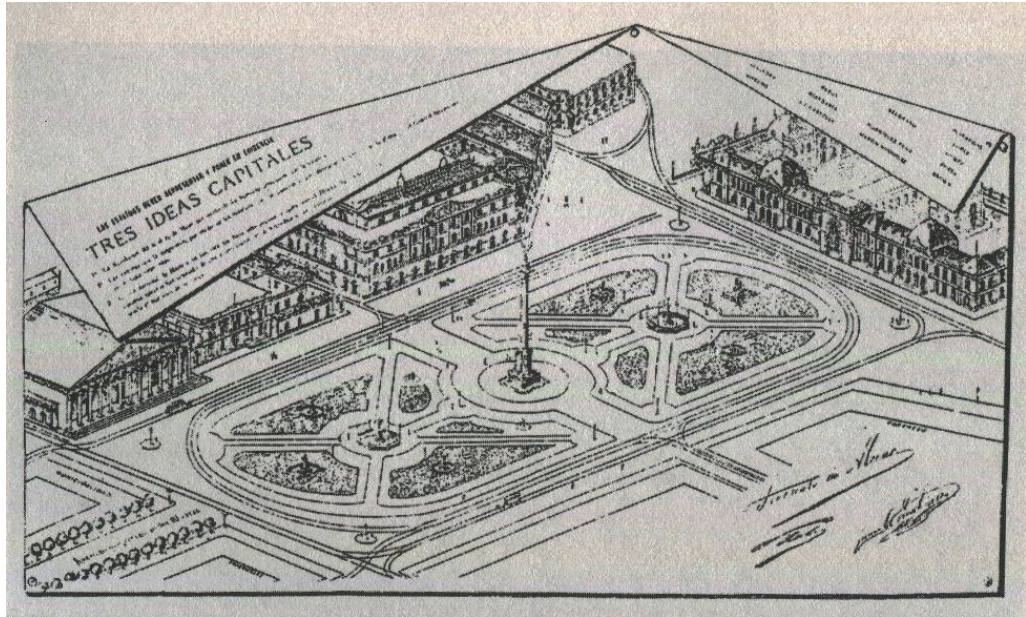
The Mayor intends to reaffirm the balanced figure of the founding map of Buenos Aires, according to an axis of symmetry defined in relation to the Plaza de Mayo, whose scale and monumentality is increased by joining it with the Plaza de la Victoria, demolishing the Recova and the Piramide de Mayo according to a project by P. Blot and J. Buschiazzo (Figures 2 and 3). This symmetry is reinforced by the projected opening of an East/West avenue, 30 meters wide, through the middle of a 9 blocks row up to Plaza Lorea, a commercial axis capable of creating a new urban scenario that alludes to Parisian density and regularity, and that stimulates the drastic renewal of the urban fabric with buildings of homogeneous profile and facades between 20 and 24m in height. Eduardo Madero's port project, aligned with the old fort, is also favoured over that of the engineer Luis Huergo, displaced to the south, on the Riachuelo (Silvestri, 1993).

**Figure 2:** View of the Recova before its demolition in 1883, behind the Casa Rosada before the building of the monumental.



Source: 30 Witcomb Colecion. Archivo General de la Nación Argentina.

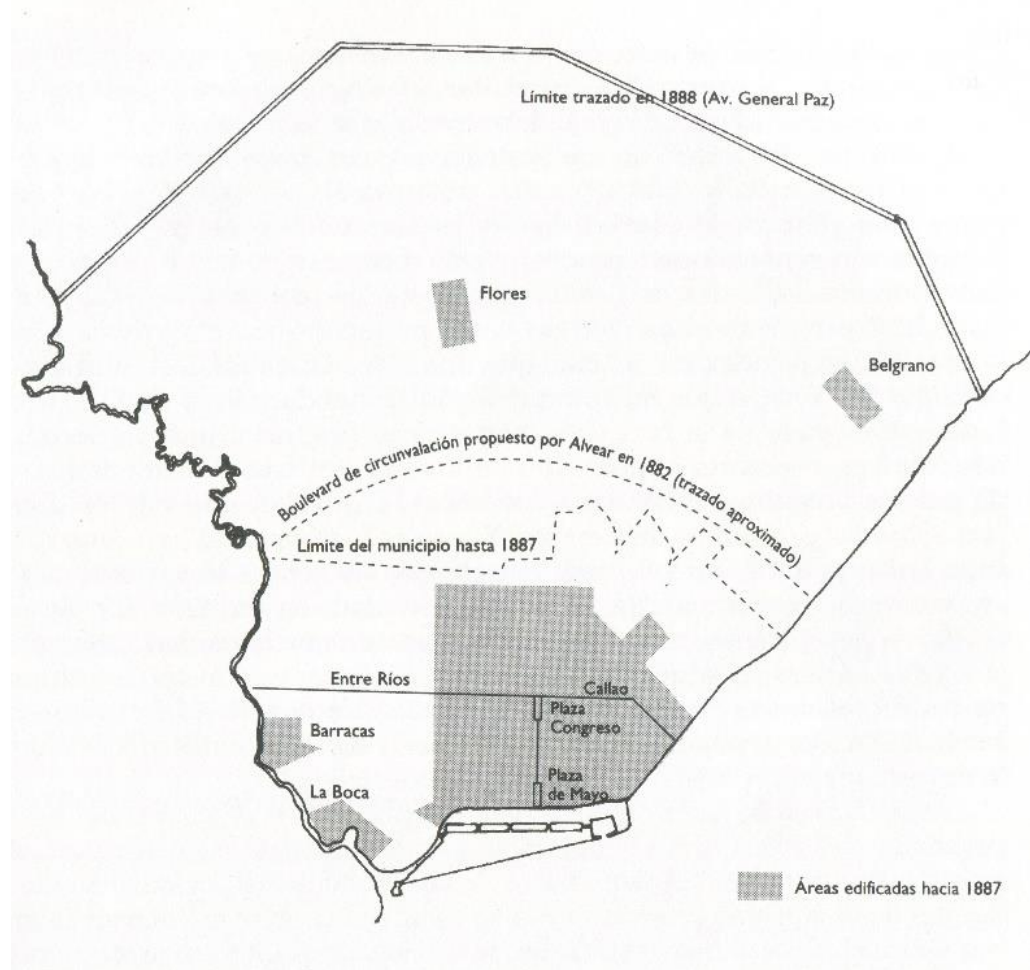
**Figure 3:** Street posters with Buschiazzo and Blot Project for the refurbishing of the Plaza de Mayo, 1883.



Source: Biblioteca Manuel Galvez CEDIAP reproduced in Gorelik (1998, p. 108).

The clear redefinition of the small city precinct, where the paving and the laying of infrastructures are to be completed, is carried out through a primary system of streets. Towards the East, with the regularization of the Bajo by a portico, the new Av. Leandro Alem, to be continued on the upper level by Av. Alvear and Av. Del Libertador; towards the West, the reinforcement of the axis of Callao-Entre Rios avenues (Figure 4) and, as an external closure, a 50-meter-wide boulevard to regularize the limits of the municipality and "to serve as a relief and promenade, contributing to the best hygiene in the city, beautifying the Capital and improving tax perception" (Alvear, 1880 *apud* Shmidt, 2012, p. 104). After the enlargement of the Federal Capital territory was completed in 1888, integrating the towns of Flores and Belgrano, this determination to provide Buenos Aires with a regular and centralized form (Shmidt, 2012, p. 120) undergoes a leap of scale through the proposal of a wide ring road that, while advancing on the pampas, acts as a clear border with the provincial territory and the whole country. This strategy is underlined by the incipient creation of a green belt through three new parks – Recoleta, Agronomic and of the Convalescence – "a sanitary, moral and civic chain" that stabilizes the contours of the traditional city renewed on itself (Gorelik, 1998, p. 172).

**Figure 4:** Outline of the city of Buenos Aires in 1887 pointing out the built areas and the two successive ring avenues projects.

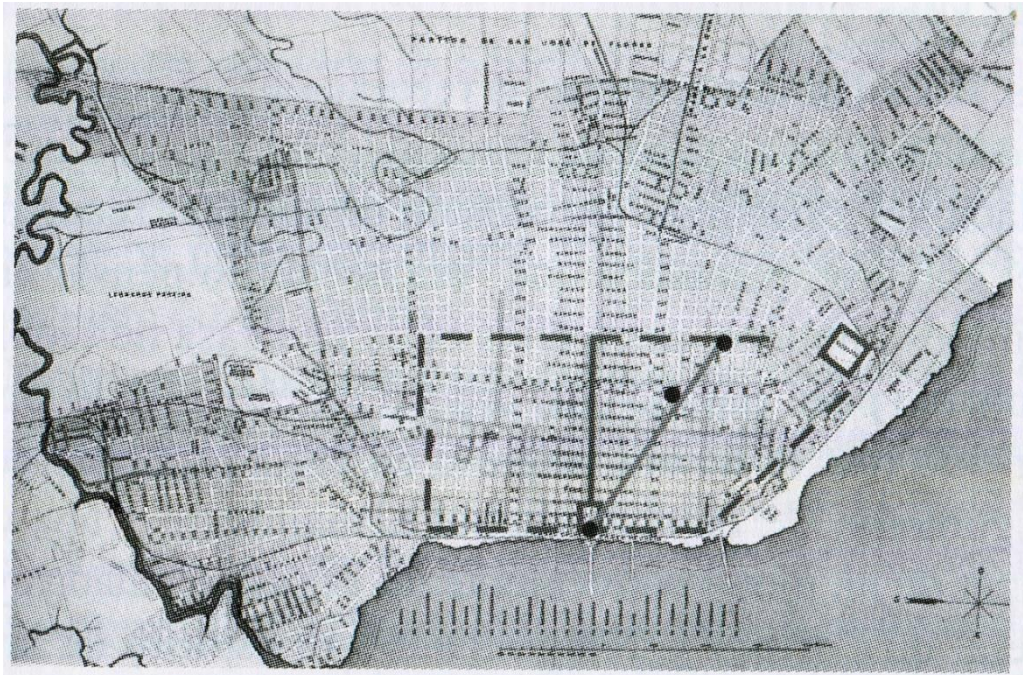


Source: Gorelik (1998, p. 15).

This desire for order underlying Mayor Torcuato de Alvear project, is completed with the purification, not without controversy, of the traces of the colonial landscape (Gorelik, 1997), demolishing the aforementioned Recova, and three arches and the tower of the old Cabildo until its presence in the Plaza de Mayo becomes almost insignificant. It also expels disruptive activities (unhealthy industries, slaughterhouses, hospitals) beyond the above-mentioned Callao-Entre Ríos axis.

The national government, in defining the location of the headquarters of the three powers of the Republic, partially confirms this “small city” strategy (Figure 5). For the Government House, the choice is made for the head of the Plaza de Mayo, on the grounds of the old fort, in a building that completes and is articulated by means of a monumental arch with the building of the general direction of Posts and Telephones according to the final project of the Italian architect Francesco Tamburini, hired by Roca to design the main public buildings. For the legislative power, and after testing other options, it is decided to allocate it on a piece of land known as the Hueco de los Olivos, originally intended for the new opera house, at the other end of Avenida de Mayo and to reinforce its status as a civic axis (Figure 6).

**Figure 5:** First location of the Presidency, the Congress and the Judiciary proposed by president J. A. Roca 1884-1886



Source: Shmidt (2012, p. 127).

**Figure 6:** View of the Avenida de Mayo towards the west with the Cabildo to the left ca.1910



Source: 35 Witcomb Colecion. Archivo General de la Nación Argentina.

However, the narrowness and insufficiency of the avenue for this purpose will be verified by the erection of the headquarters of the Congreso de la Nación, and thus a succession of new projects of monumental openings, diagonal and transversal, will be promoted. As for the headquarters of the judiciary and the new opera house, they end up being located in the area of the old Estación del Parque, towards the north, thus promoting the



development of the most modern area of the city and causing, over the years, a clear imbalance in the ideal order pursued by the initiatives of Torcuato de Alvear.

### **3 Forty years later, a cosmopolitan beacon**

When in October 1922 Marcelo T. de Alvear, Torcuato's son, is elected President of the Nation by an enlarged electoral base, he promotes a new urban reform for Buenos Aires which, although it largely vindicates his father's initiatives, is meant to meet the demands of a county and a city substantially transformed.

The successful integration of Argentina into the world market, the establishment of industries around the big cities, an immigration that changed the demographic profile and distribution, the growing social conflicts and, as a response, the electoral reform of 1912, were mirrored in Buenos Aires. A population ten times larger, the foreign origin of almost 50% of its inhabitants and its disturbing social ascent were imprinted in a discordant urban scape and in the extended suburbs with its muddy streets. The recent Centennial celebrations were surrounded by dreams of opulence, although at the same time it encouraged gloomy visions of a cultural breakdown that were intended to be drowned in the deleterious atmospheres of spirituality. Between both extremes, the urban project of 1925 stands out for its progressivism.

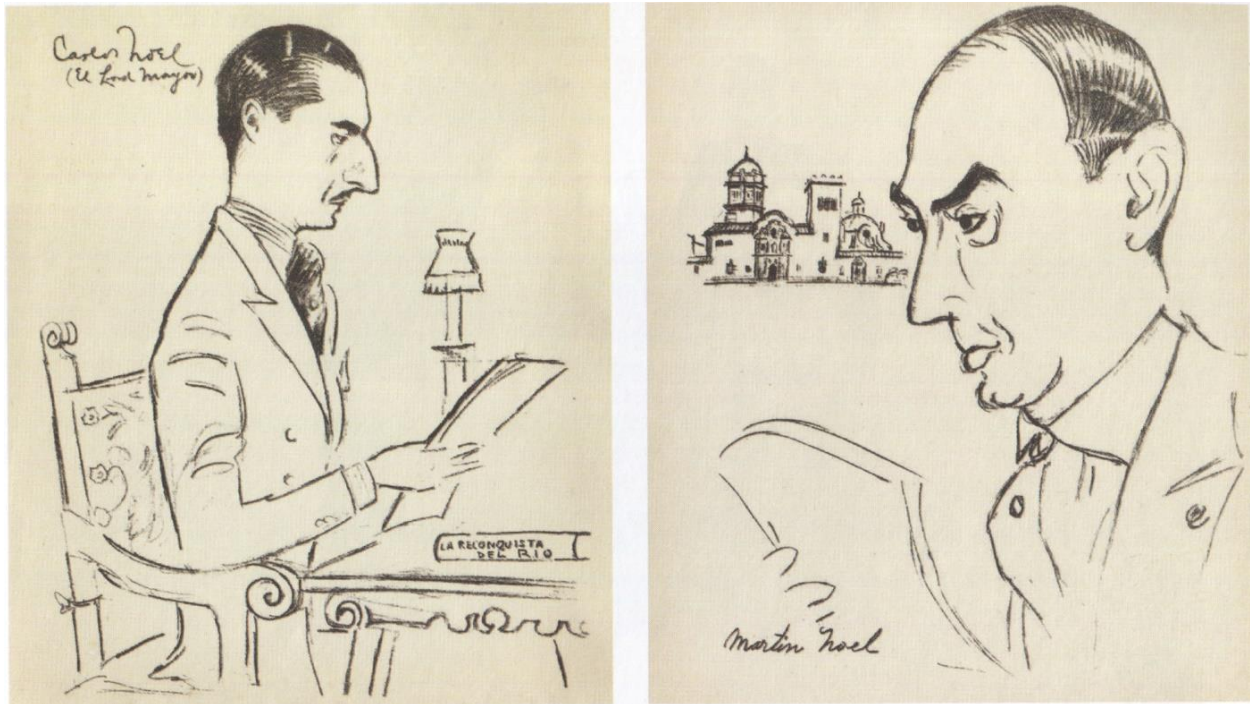
One of Alvear's first gestures is to choose his friend Carlos Noel (at that time ambassador to Chile) as the future mayor. In less than 45 days, at a dinner of the Central Society of Architects, Noel presents a detailed "building program" that, although it makes references to noble and simple architecture to form monumental squares, also shows signs of concern for the suburban living conditions (Noel, 1922).

His brother, Martín Noel (Figure 7), has a lot to do with the drafting of this program and the choice of the stage where it is presented. Architect, recognized theorist of Spanish-colonial art, he has recently been awarded by the Academy of Fine Arts of San Fernando and the Ibero-American Exhibition of Seville. Martín plays a key role in the outlining of the urban project of 1925 and in part this allows us to understand the criteria for designating for its execution a Building Aesthetics Commission formed by the heads of those institutions in charge of guiding public works in the Federal Capital: Martín was one of its members as president of the National Commission of Fine Arts (Rigotti, 2019a).

By assigning the preparation of the urban plan to this Commission, Mayor Noel not only recognizes for the first time the urban competence of Argentine technicians, but also seeks to circumvent the interference of an adverse Deliberative Council and to strengthen his bond with the neighbourhood associations on which his political power is based.

The explicit objective of the plan is to define an urban reform to make of Buenos Aires "the most advanced manifestation of the prosperity and moral, intellectual and social personality of the Nation." A project that "should not only reflect the character and thinking of its inhabitants, but also shape its physiognomy in the manner of the great capitals of the world, expressing the ethnic values of ALL Argentines" (Intendencia Municipal, 1925, p. 11). There is a more prosaic purpose: to justify a loan to complete the opening of two diagonal avenues starting at the Plaza de Mayo, although the mayor also intends to allocate part of the money to suburban neighbourhoods, to mitigate flooding, extend public transportation and improve their squares.

**Figure 7:** Carlos and Martín Noel cartoons by Pelele in times of the drafting of the urban plan. Biblioteca Nacional.



Source: Rigotti; Menéndez; Alexander (2019, p.15).

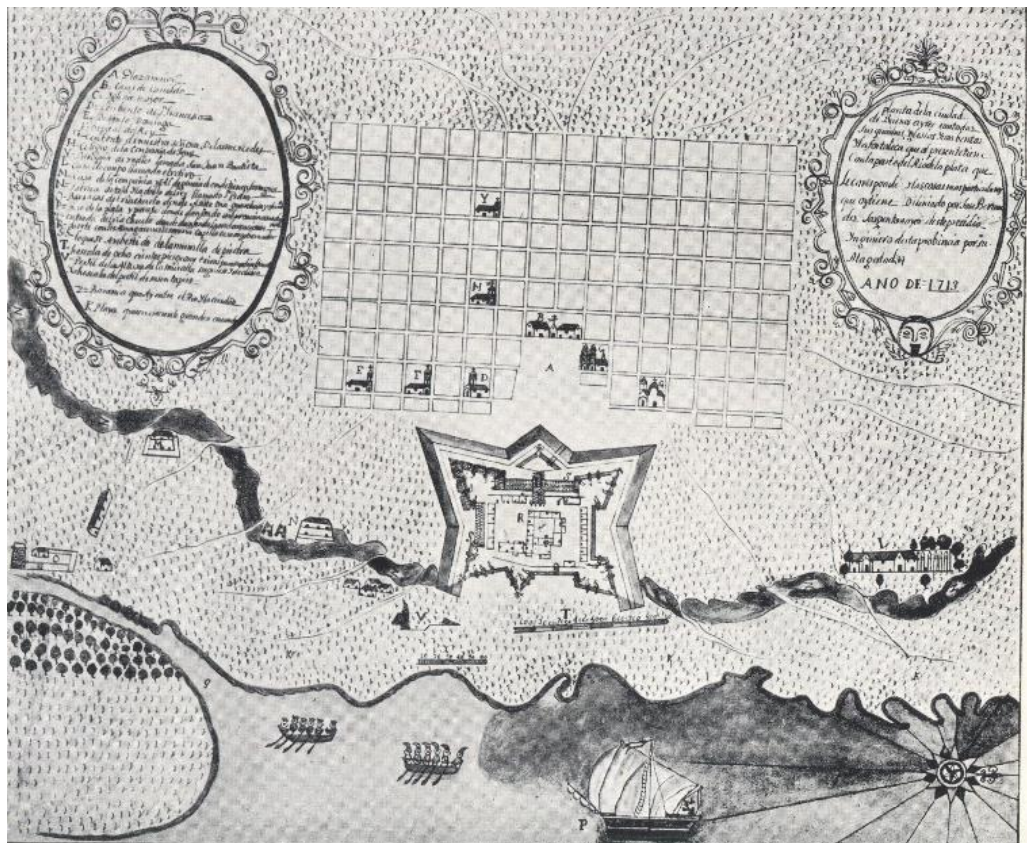
Already in the aforementioned "building program", it is clear that, although it is a matter of concern to introduce reforms that will expand the civic scenarios and improve the monumental features of the Capital Federal as a whole, it is also of interest to open the city to the estuary of the Rio de la Plata to create new environments for popular life, to progress the oldest and most traditional sector – the Barrio Sur – lethargic due to some extent to the public buildings set on the northern quadrant and, last but not least, to promote public housing and other improvements in suburban neighbourhoods, the site of the working classes and the economic life of the metropolis.

Martín Noel coins the concept of "fusion" to refer to the vivifying action that, in the evolution of artistic forms, had the conjunction of a traditional, cultured and normalized art, with the action and imagination of craftsmen who carry in themselves certain destiny imprinted in the landscape. This concept is made up to understand Mudejar art, and later to emphasize the value and the authenticity of Hispanic American art (Noel, 1926). He also uses it to address the conflicts that afflict Buenos Aires as a city and as a society (Rigotti, 2019e). The city was the seat of political power of the provinces and of the male vote of Argentines or nationalized citizens represented in the institutions of the Nation State, but also of the local power of the popular classes, largely foreigners, with participation in municipal management through the Neighbourhood Development Commissions. It was necessary to reconcile the conservative expectations of the political elite and traditional "small city" property owners with the more pressing demands of the bustling metropolis. Thus, Martín Noel recovers the concept of fusion to guide the *parti pris* of the new urban project: it has to combine the scientific and presumably universal principles of "up-to-date" scientific urbanism, with the "practical and natural conditions" of Buenos Aires, with its distinctiveness as a city linked to its history and its geography (Intendencia Municipal, 1925, p. 59).

#### 4 Topography and landscape as means of Urbanism

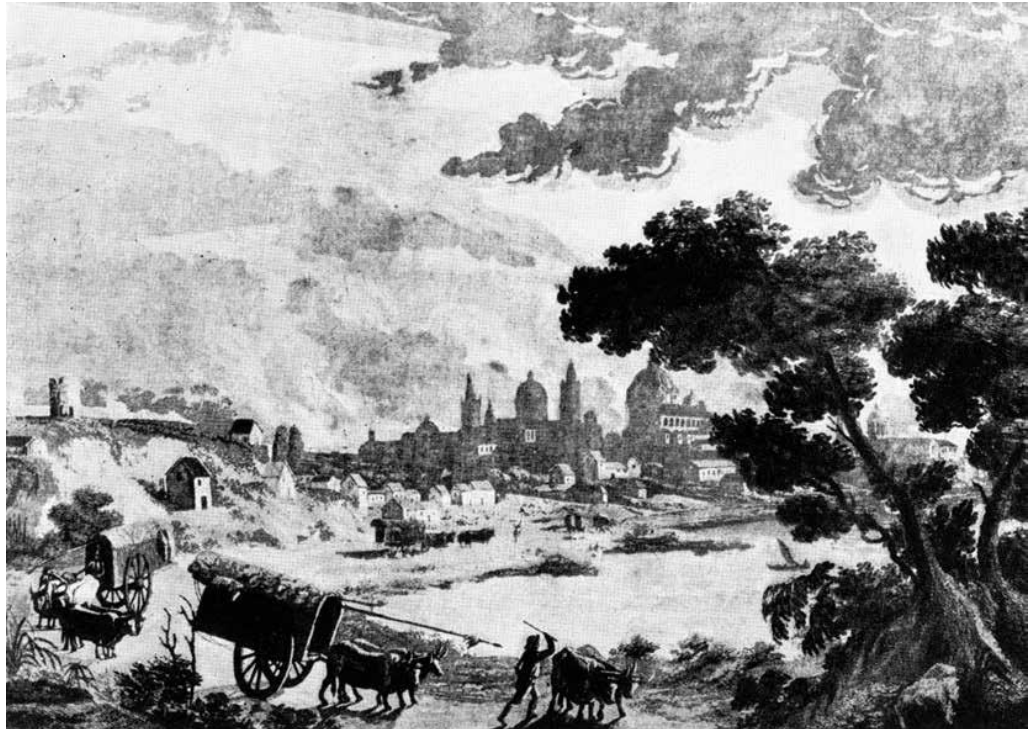
According to Martín Noel, this particular traits of Buenos Aires are expressed in an "essential physiognomy" that he traces through a "Brief historical synthesis", based on the vivid evocation of certain visual reconstructions of the city in time (Intendencia Municipal, 1925, p. 23-52). And this physiognomy has to lead the urban reform. Borrowed as a concept from Oswald Spengler (1923, p. 147), the physiognomy is interpreted as the expressive and visible form of a nation or a community. It allows M. Noel to think of the city of Buenos Aires as an emblem of Argentine identity and to identify in its urban form the features of a culture ready to reincarnate itself in a new urban layout, in the reformulation of its public spaces and in the relatively regulated renovation of its buildings. This physiognomy is traced in ancient maps and in old lithographs and nineteenth century photographs and identified in some characteristic uses and sites (Figures 8 and 9). The Brief historical synthesis guides us to acknowledge the clarity of the limits, the alameda along the shoreline, the representative and recreational use of the coast, the port vocation of the Riachuelo, the fan-shaped paths towards a Hinterland that encompasses the whole country, the squares as urban gates and the public buildings capable of communicating a "sense of prosperity and modern evolution" and, above all, the inexorable break of the urban unity symbolized in the demolition of the Recova in 1884 which would have opened the new fragmentary and multicentre condition of Buenos Aires.

**Figure 8:** Map of the city of Buenos Aires by José Bermúdez, 1713.



Source: Intendencia Municipal (1925, p. 19).

**Figure 9:** Acquaforte by Fernando Brambilla from *de Camino de las Carretas*, 1794, reproduced by Arsène Ysabelle in *Voyage à Buénos Ayres et à Porto Alegre, par la Banda Oriental*, de 1835.



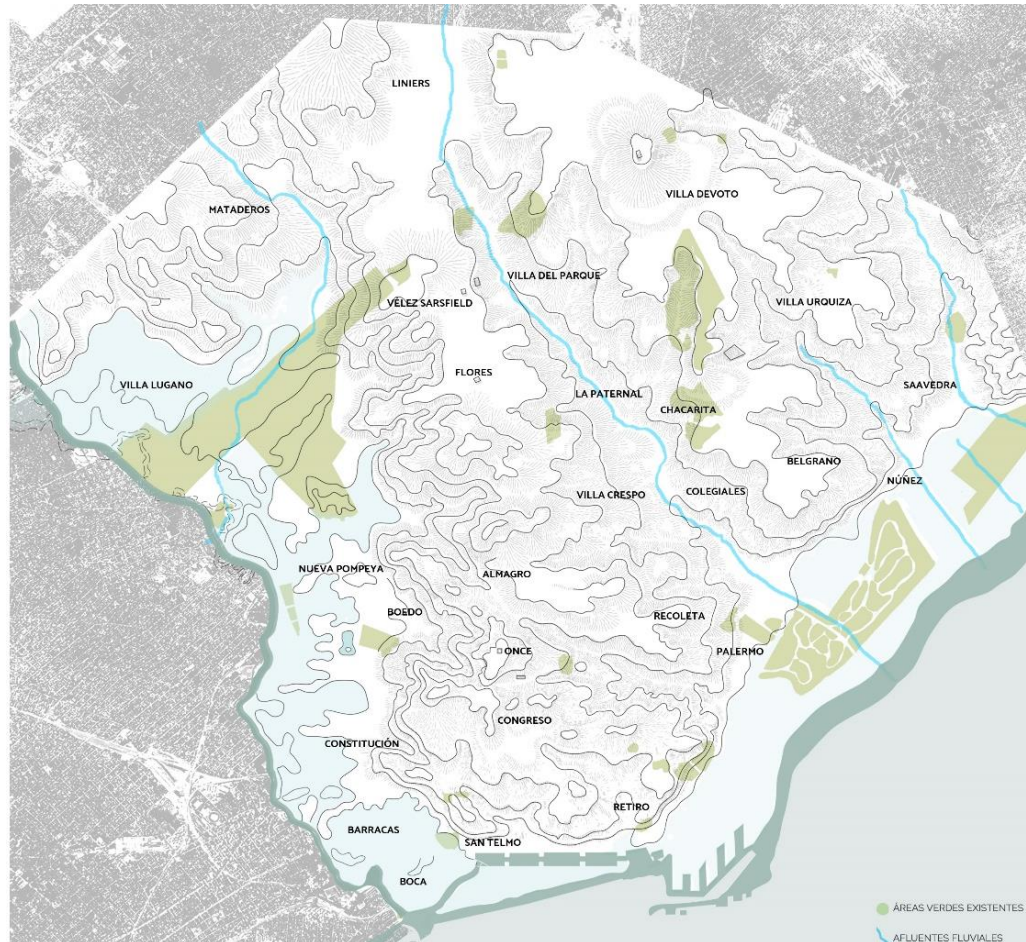
Source: Intendencia Municipal (1925, p. 12).

This sites and uses are considered as an expression of the will of form of an ethnic group of alluvial origin that, however, has managed to amalgamate in a new entity in harmony with the landscape. These sites and uses are intended as elements of an essential physiognomy that, if respected, would allow the city to cope with its precipitous and unforeseen development, the increasing traffic, and the commotions caused by demographic growth, and still remaining the same. Martín Noel devises a sort of game between past and present where geography, the horizontal vastness of the pampas and the infinite placidity of the river play a fundamental role to justify the modesty and rusticity of the urban buildings and to guide the future urban works without constraining them.

A striking proof of the value given to geography is the topographic map where the differences in level are graphically magnified (Intendencia Municipal, 1925, p. 56) and which serves to support the hypothesis of the mutation of Buenos Aires into a large agglomeration of the most modern type, a metropolis made up of different urban regions superimposed on a relief that has determined the natural division into zones (Figure 10). This topography apparently has modelled a logical distribution of neighbourhoods that are differentiated and isolated from each other, and the formation of a wide coastal area where Buenos Aires concentrates its role as capital and gate of the Nation.

This “natural” disintegration, which is not intended to be erased but rather to be connected, is the key to the project of two coexisting and overlapping cities – the Capital and the Metropolis – each with its own logic, which acquire meaning in their confluence in the Buenos Aires of the future (Rigotti, 2019c).

**Figure 10:** Topography of Buenos Aires as the main argument for the general layout.



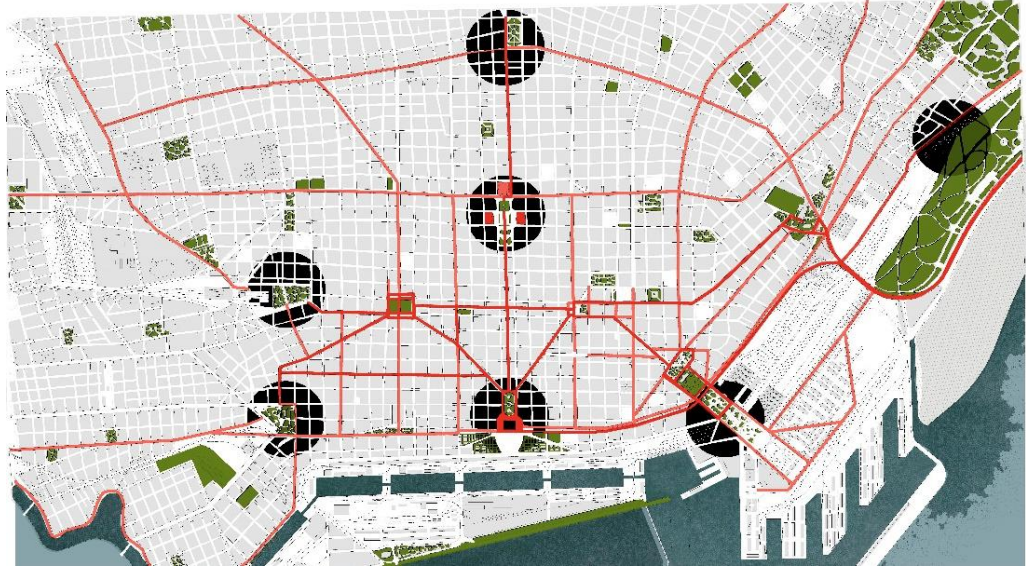
Source: Intendencia Municipal (1925, p. 56).

The Capital continues to be proposed as the "small city" of Torcuato de Alvear, with a limit on the Callao-Entre Ríos axis. Its civic dimension will be enhanced through a series of monumental paved squares with certain functional specialization and where the architectural value of the institutional headquarters will be improved by the regulation of the buildings in the perimeter (Figure 11). Linked by the extension of four diagonals and the North-South avenue, these squares will also have open sights on the Rio de la Plata thanks to the gradual disappearance of Puerto Madero. Some of them will shelter the political power (Congress, Plaza de Mayo, Plaza Independencia), others will take in cultural events and symbols in two nodes in tension (Lezama and Retiro), and the rest will act as gates open to the world (maritime station and airport in Puerto Nuevo) and to inland (Retiro, Once, Constitución).

As the energetic focus of the civic, intellectual and spiritual life of the Nation, in the realm of the Capital City, beauty operates as a synthesis and the resources are those of classic urban art: a sequence of voids with regular contours and focal points of interest in the public buildings, geometric squares devoid of trees or ornamental gardens rejected as visual obstacles, which stand out against an extensive and anodyne urban fabric (Figure 12). The reference to various models (Salamanca, Nice, Champs-Élysées) is used to persuade about the convenience of imposing aesthetic easements, the object of controversies insofar as they violate the right to property. But for the adaptation of classic composition to the logic of regular and open American cities, the teachings of Werner Hegemann and Elbert Peets in *The American Vitruvius* are fundamental (Rigotti, 2019d).

Let us remember that this book was published barely a year before the constitution of the Building Aesthetics Commission and that even its proposal of using skyscrapers as milestones in the urban silhouette was taken into account in the project for the new Plaza de Mayo.

**Figure 11:** Graphic interpretation of the project for the Capital (by F. F. Méndez/ C. Sant'Ana)



Source: Rigotti; Menéndez; Alexander (2019, p. 58)

**Figure 12:** Photo-montage of one of the projects for the Plaza de Mayo, by E. Menéndez.

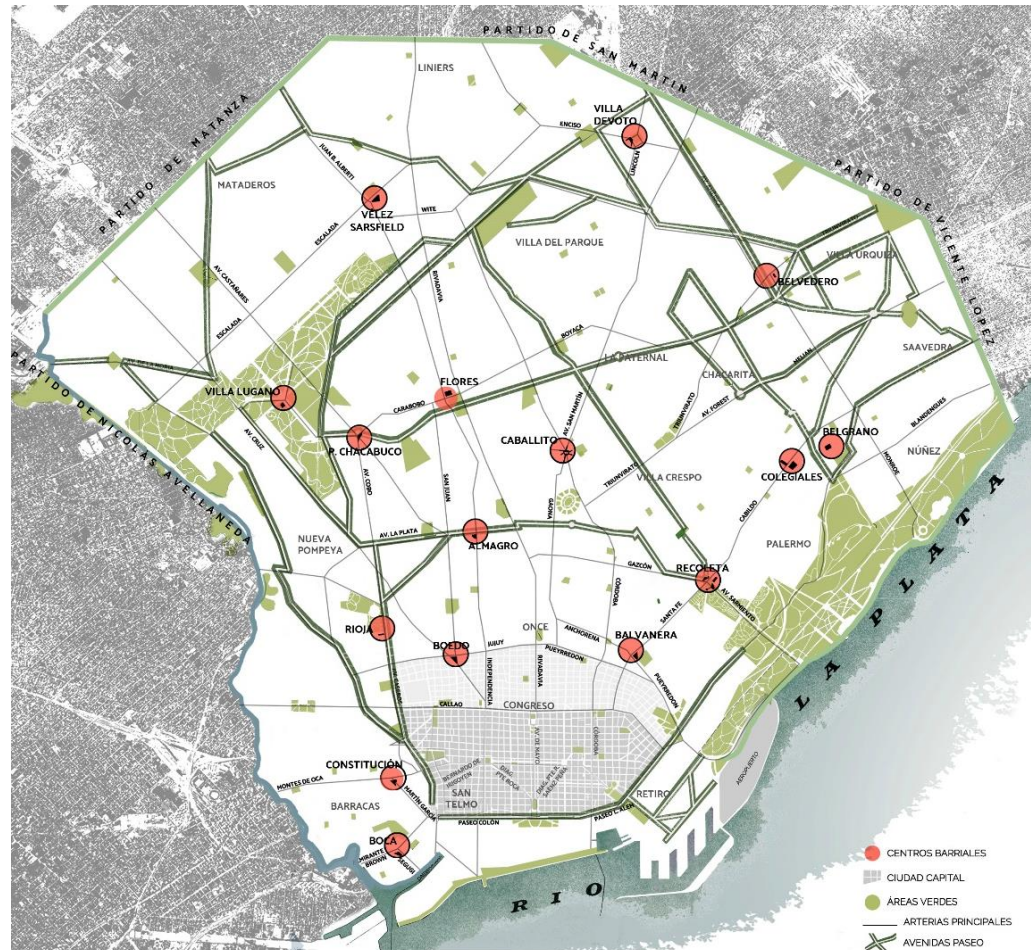


Source: Rigotti; Menéndez; Alexander (2019, p. 80).

The Metropolis is thought of as a constellation of centralities, confirming the relative independence of the different neighbourhoods with the construction of headquarters for the administrative decentralization of the local government. These new centralities are the starting point for an attempt at equitable distribution of green spaces, markets, outpatient clinics and other services, ensuring their connection through the convergence of a primary network of wide streets and avenues (Figure 13). However, the main connection of these neighbourhoods with the Capital will be an expanded subway network that ensures stations at a maximum of 600 m from any point of the urbanized land. However,

undoubtedly the most remarkable innovation is the new network of parkways and gardens conceived as an equation of health and beauty, which crosses and brings together the different *barrios*. Linking squares, playgrounds, natural reservations, sports fields and garden cemeteries by means of promenade avenues and waterfronts, this park system is designed by J. C. N. Forestier, the *polytechnicien* hired as a foreign consultant.

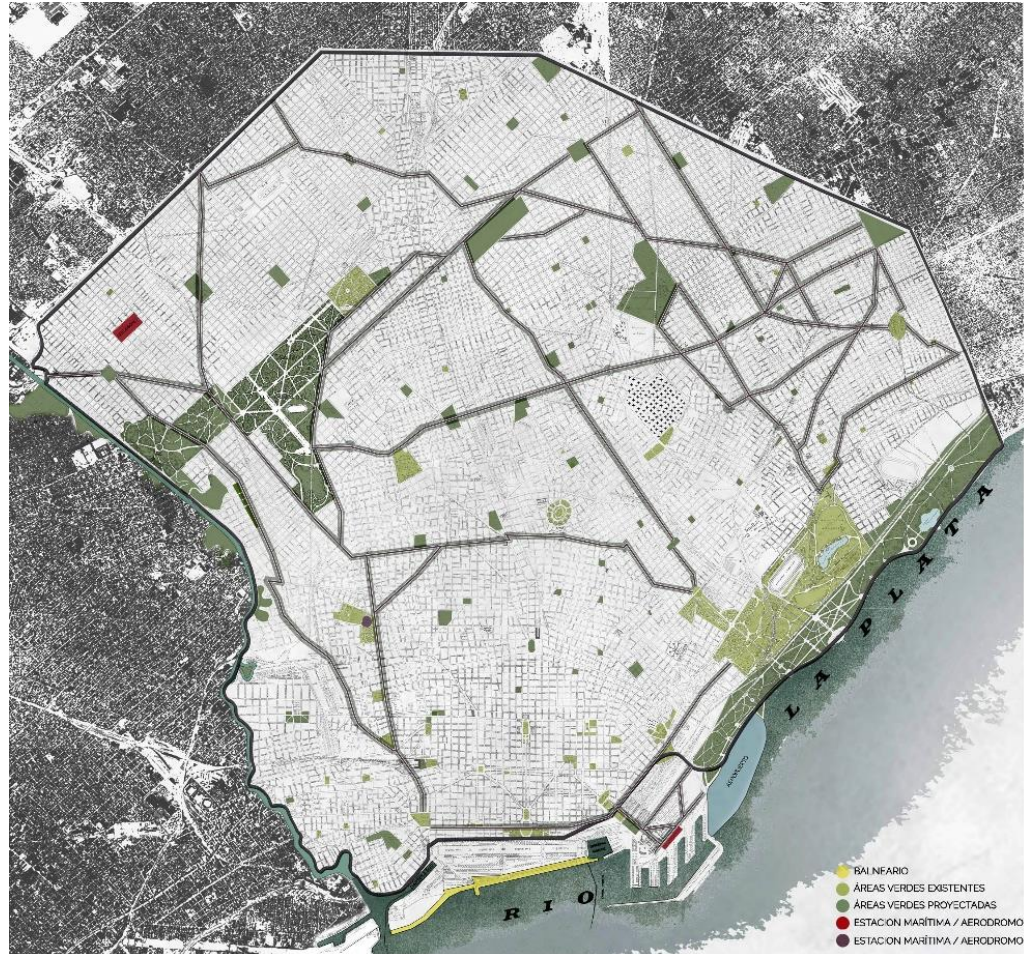
**Figure 13:** Graphic interpretation of the project for the Metropolis by F. F. Méndez/ C. Sant'Ana)



Source: Rigotti; Menéndez; Alexander (2019, p. 62).

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**Figure 14:** Graphic interpretation of Forestier's Park System by F. F. Méndez/ C. Sant'Ana



Source: Rigotti; Menéndez; Alexander (2019, p. 67).

In the case of the Metropolis, the lessons of the English landscape school and the “German irregular and picturesque system” were there to understand the aesthetic advantages of the low density of an urban fabric defined by the open and intermittent weave of streets and irregular layouts. These theories also allowed the appreciation of the simple suburban houses so admired in the future by foreign urban planners on their trips to the South (Le Corbusier, Hegemann). Their trees, orchards and clumsy adaptation to the topographical irregularities, that allowed them to intermingle with the beautiful plantations of old country houses, are praised and their disorder is assimilated to the spontaneous growth of European cities, and is thus promoted.

## 5 A concept and the persuasion of geography

Martín Noel concept of “fusion” was useful to imagine the conciliation -on the urban arena- between the modern drives and certain essential physiognomy, the dignified representation of the Nation and the demands of the “barrios” as new entities of sociability and political practice, the civic settings of a capital city with new locations for the healthy leisure of the working classes, the expanded system of diagonals and large avenues as the scenery for noble architecture and the underground network serving the workers’ houses, the classical beauty in the civic oases suitable for the concentration of the crowds, and the picturesque as an aesthetic guide to confirm the natural character of the scattered aggregations of the *barrios* and the decorum of their small orchards and playgrounds. In



short, the concept of fusion promoted a possible assembling of the Capital and the Metropolis in the city of Buenos Aires.

Like the sequence of reforms promoted by Torcuato de Alvear four decades earlier, the Organic Project of the Building Aesthetics Commission was a municipal proposal. In September 1925, it was submitted as a bill to the National Congress. It was never approved. But as Daniel Burnham once suggested, big plans synthesized in noble, logical and spectacular diagrams, aimed high in hope and work, stir men's blood and work on the imagination of the citizen (Moore, 1921, p. 147). Several of the 1925 Plan's propositions reappear in the Master Plan devised by Le Corbusier and two Argentine disciples fifteen years later, taking into account Buenos Aires urban history related to its unique landscape (Rigotti, 2021). Several of its guidelines, from the development of the waterfront to the decentralization of the local government in a network of municipal centres, are present in the city today (Rigotti, 2019a).

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