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## Royal Garden Design Performed to Favour Housing and Social Development in El Pardo, a Protected Environment in Madrid

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### Abstract

El Pardo was named Royal Site, in the reign of Fernando VI. His successor Carlos III proceeded to incorporate to its Heritage its hills and woods. It started then a new urban process and architectural building completed in 1802. After the Spanish Civil War in 1939, General Francisco Franco placed his residence in the Royal Palace of El Pardo. This village began processing and performing its urban and architectural context into an unrecognizable landscape. Diego Méndez, the architect Head of project, concealed a New Urban Development Plan promoted by General Francisco Franco. In order of Royal Gardening design there were two transformations which broke the original design to optimize the housing development or new public spaces. The first is about the Royal Palace Garden and the second one is about the Prince House Garden. This study aims to critically examine the social forces that shape and transform the two main Royal Gardens in this Royal Site in Madrid, Spain. Madrid is chosen as the study case, as part of a funded project entitled “Proximity Landscapes of the city of Madrid. From the 19th Century to the present”, (Cod. HAR2014-57843-R).

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**Keywords:** El Pardo; Carlos III; Royal Site; Spanish Civil War; Diego Méndez; urban development; environment; landscape;

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### 1. Introduction

El Pardo was named Royal Site, in the reign of Fernando VI. His successor Carlos III proceeded to incorporate to its Heritage its hills and woods. It started then a new urban process and architectural building completed in 1802 (Fig. 1). In virtue of the Law of 7 March 1940, the town of El Pardo was designated for the use and services of the head of state, with the Royal Palace designed as his official residence and thus becoming part of the State’s assets.

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A restoration and renewal plan for the old city or Royal Core was then implemented at the initiative of the Spanish National Heritage. The greatest transformations in the town, gardens and its surroundings were carried out by architect Diego Méndez.

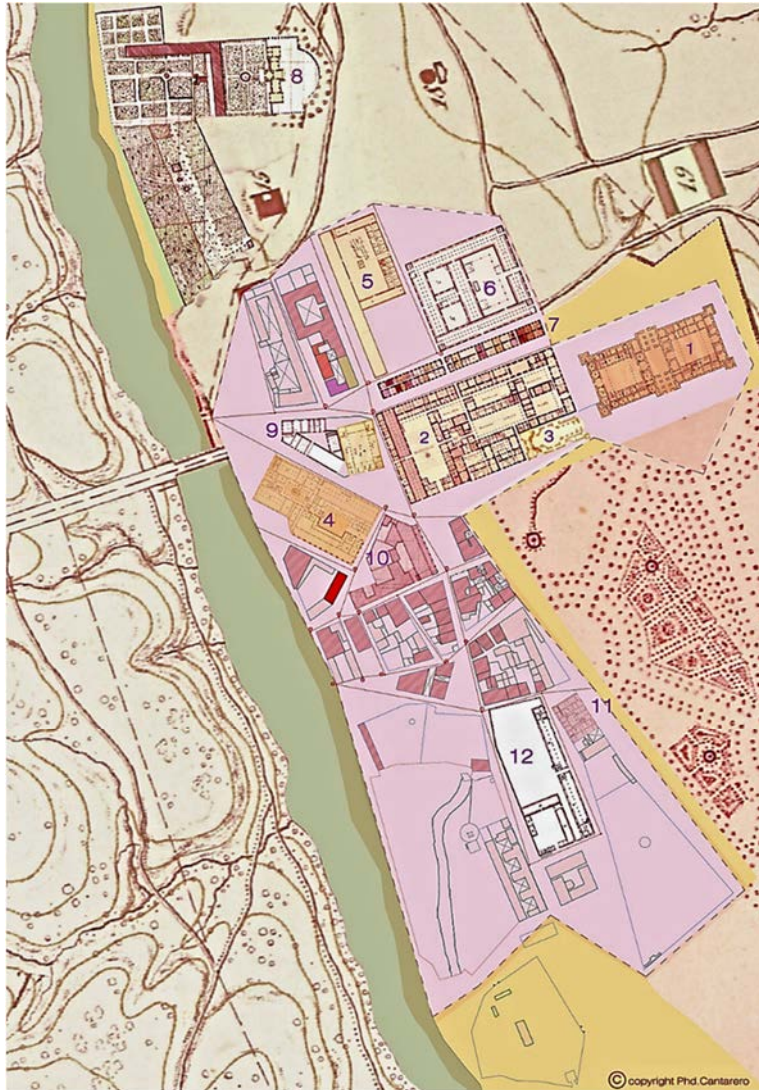


Fig. 1. Carlos III Royal Site of El Pardo (c.1778-1786). ©Author's drawing urban plan and building restitution (2015): 1: the Royal Palace after Sabatini enlargement, 2: Offices House by Juan de Milla this recent information provided by the National Heritage investigator Javier Fernández , 3: The Royal Chapel by Carlier, Villanueva, Isidro G. Velázquez; 4: Infants House by León de Gamiz; 5: Corps Headquarters , 6: Ballesteria Headquarters by B.Fdz.del Anillo, 7: Retamar Headquarters, 8: Prince House attributed to Juan de Villanueva (s/Moleón) , 9: Regalada House and Barrón House or King garages (Ricla's ensemble), 10: Abastos House , 11: Offices House project by Isidro G. Velázquez (in 1829 s/Moleón) , 12: Boyerizas Headquarters (in Cantera Montenegro 1998 ISSN-0214-6452).

## Urban plans and gardening affectations

### 2.1 New Town Ordination Planning by Diego Méndez

The construction of homes for the civil population was restricted to National Heritage functionaries. Only

partially realised, Diego Méndez's projects were inspired by the model of the 'city garden' and therefore, their impact is significantly lower than the housing blocks raised by Andrada and today transferred to State Heritage [1].

In 1941, Méndez wrote *El Pardo New Town* (Fig. 2), which was published in 1947 in the RNA (National Architecture Review) [2]. His work shows the urgency of regenerating infrastructures that would offer the town improvements focused on the use of housing under the concepts defended by Muguruza. Surely Méndez appreciated the landscape between the Manzanares River and the royal core as he anticipated the possibility of a worthy residential performance according to the context introducing a renewal Plan which was never completed.

Between the 40s and the 50s, Diego Mendez's works defined a high percentage of the current physiognomy in El Pardo village. They have been found numerous interventions about the Royal Site referred to reformation or punctual conditioning as well as urban infrastructures and new works. He starts by several Royal Palace works but his motivation of regenerating a historical place encourages him to introduce what he titled *El Pardo New Town* in 1941 found in the General Archive of the Spanish National Heritage [AGP]. This plan comprised maintaining the Infants' House and the Offices House as well as the Connectionist's Convent. The deteriorated farmhouses had to disappear to lead two typologies of detached houses and some other public buildings like a Town Hall, a sports field and a civil square following the patterns of Devastated Regions Department. This thesis about *El Pardo New Town* if Méndez's Plan had been completed brings us to this research study which puts in order urban and building ideas of the architect into the housing scope of the El Pardo Royal Site.

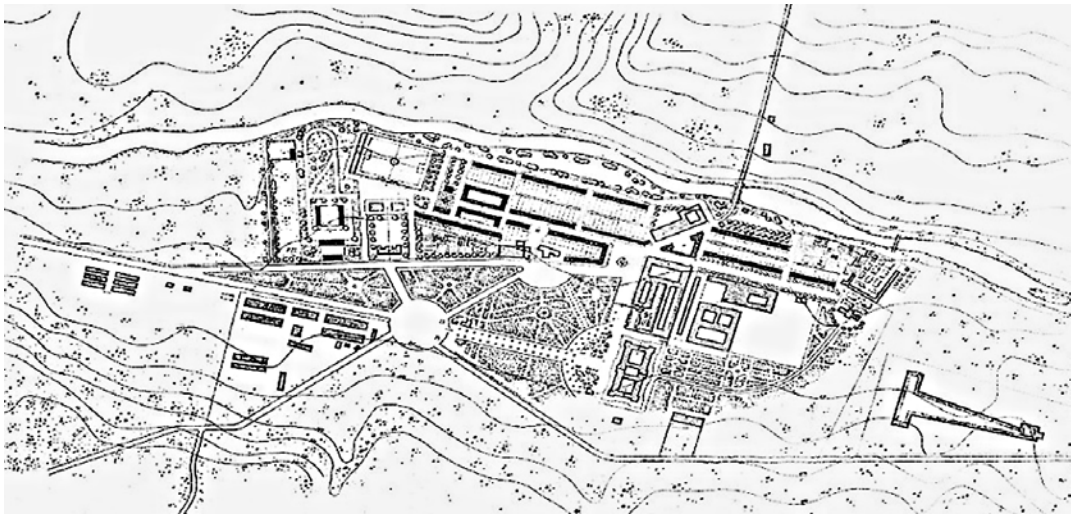


Fig. 2. Final proposal for the "New Town of El Pardo" Urban Plan by Diego Méndez architect (1941).

## 2.2 Royal Gardens performed in favour of housing and social development in El Pardo

According to the Royal Gardening design, they have been found two performances which broke the original design with a view to favour housing development or new public spaces. The first is about the Royal Palace Garden and the second one is about the Prince House Garden. This investigation manifests these changes which altered the original garden design and the consequences of these modifications.

- The Former Main Access Road to the Royal Outbuildings and the Royal Garden

The inquiry of the anonymous painting found in the Real Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial in Madrid (Fig. 3), offers us the opportunity to observe that the main road that formerly led to the entrance to the Palace and the Guesthouses was not this one but the extension to what is now the wall of the Royal Gardens within the Parque de la

Mar Océana and, therefore, allows us to analyse the changes experienced in the period considered herein by using sketches of layouts and designs. By analysing these sketches from the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries (indicated in codes over the original paintings) it has been established a comparison with those described below from the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, and this article points up that there were two important areas that affected the layout of the Royal Gardens:

First, it was that the real direction of access changes and becomes parallel and contained within the principal façade, as seen in the magenta code, due to being located perpendicular to it and at the height of the feet of the Royal Chapel.



Fig. 3. El Pardo Royal Palace (17th Century), Anonymous, San Lorenzo del Escorial Monastery; performed by the author (2012).

Secondly, the lands of the current Plaza de la Mar Océana shown in red (Fig. 4), were gardens of the Royal Palace and that their original outline was kept intact until around the 1960s. The overlapped coloured hatches show in orange the Former Calle del Rei, and now Avenida de la Guardia and in blue colour the Royal Palace Ancient Main Path.

- Parque de la Mar Océana, former grounds of the Royal Gardens

The lands of the present Plaza de la Mar Océana, (Fig. 5) were therefore the gardens of the Royal Palace and their original outline was kept intact until around the 1960s.

These lands were ceded with the aim of endowing the Avenida de la Guardia with a recreational space and room for expansion. Later, a music pavilion was proposed, a project commissioned to Diego Méndez that never was executed.

- The Main Access Route to the Royal Gardens

Isidro González Velázquez, who was a disciple of Juan de Villanueva, planned numerous works in the 19<sup>th</sup> century El Pardo, which included an enclosure gate for the Royal Palace Gardens at El Pardo. The king's architect projected not only the new garden, which would stretch out towards the south, but also pretended to plan the overall enclosure and the main entry. Today, the gates are only opened when official ceremonies must let the heads of state pass through who are lodging in the Royal Palace.

The new gardens are understood as included in this operation (with their trellises, gates and fountains) divided into two equal parts that were separated by the promenade that leads towards the main door of the palace. Velázquez took on this work in virtue of a verbal order from King Fernando VII in 1828, finishing the works in 1830 [3].



Fig. 4. Original and current outline of El Pardo Royal Palace gardens. © Author's drawing urban plan and gardening restitution.



Fig. 5. Mar Océana Park (a) anonymous (1960); (b) Author's picture (2012).

### 2.3 Modifications of the Royal Garden of the *Casita del Príncipe*

The *Casita del Príncipe*, or Prince's Cottage, and its gardens [4] formed a part of the gardened setting of El Pardo Palace, whose north-facing façade was linked to the cottage via a tree-lined promenade that led to a square shaped like a half moon (Fig. 6).

Méndez developed an extensive dedication that was not only related to architecture at the Royal Site but also to urban planning. As mentioned above, there were about 136 works in his inventory [5], in which all the initiatives undertaken in the village of El Pardo between 1939 and 1960 are described. Among others, new growth towards the north was already anticipated, which was increasingly and more urgently requested by the population of El Pardo. This would end up being concreted in the Mingorrubio district [6], which is not handled herein as it falls outside the residential perimeter of the core of study. The modifications shown here (Fig. 7) clearly-affected the Prince's Gardens due to this newly-constructed road that would connect the urban centre with this housing estate, prolonging the Paseo de El Pardo. The figure depicts a vertical reading from the current state, designed by Méndez in the last 40s, of the original that was redesigned by Xavier Winthuysen in 1920 [7] along the two lines that join the main gardens within the same

scale. This new road can be seen to represent a radical separation.



Fig. 6. (a) Prince House gardens, author's picture (2012); (b) Prince House, author's picture (2012).

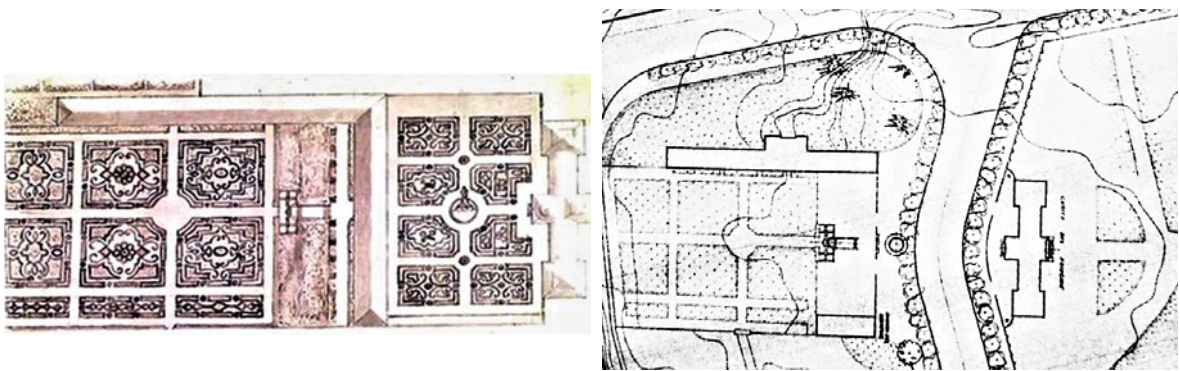


Fig. 7. Prince House gardens; (a) Performance Design by Xavier Winthuysen (1920).

(b) Post-war performance by Diego Méndez (1953).

### 3. Results and Discussions

This research clarifies the hypotheses about the physiognomy of the brown being carried out Mendez's plan in its entirety and put in order urban and building ideas of the architect into the housing scope of the El Pardo Royal Site. According to the Royal Gardening design this investigation finds out two performances which broke the original design with a view to favour housing development or new public spaces. The first is about the Royal Palace Garden and the second one is about the Prince House Garden. The purpose of this study is to manifest these changes which altered the original garden design and the consequences of these modifications.

### 4. Conclusions

After the three tough years of Civil War, the establishment of the Royal Site as the new official residency would foster and promote a time for renewal via the different regenerative proposals. There were numerous social projects discarded because of the precarious economic situation. The annexing of El Pardo to the city of Madrid did not change the town's management, which until 1931, had been part of the Royal Heritage. However, the restoration and renovation of the buildings is what led to our present attempt to envision how different El Pardo may have been if the essence of the end of the last century had been kept alive.

The royal ambience of El Pardo during the 19<sup>th</sup> Century changed to a purely military air in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

At present, large-scale building initiatives should take in account the precedence of the Urban Heritage context and the rural environment in which they are developed. However, due to its overwhelming scale, a landscape that can barely breathe continues to be suffocated, closing off the views on the main access roads.

Thus, buildings arise that are cut off from any overall character and that will imminently have to be involved in a plan for new works within this site that is after all a Royal Site. The result is an undone and incoherent section usurped by behemoth constructions that split up and disintegrate the import of the Monte de El Pardo. Unfortunately, trying to recover a past lost reality can now only be the object of a study on paper, where the damages suffered by Madrid's Royal Site are physically irreparable. Once again it is proven that speeding up unplanned construction development for a natural setting can end up being counterproductive and damaging.

The current Royal Site of El Pardo and its Royal Gardens have been the aim of influential changes in its physiognomy over the course of seven centuries. Restoring this image and returning to that time is part of the objective of the doctoral thesis (PhD) of this author entitled *Residential Architecture in the Royal Site of El Pardo (1885-1965), origins, types and configuration of the urban traces* [8], of which this study is one of the points that is therein dealt with.

### Acknowledgement(s)

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