

VareseNews

Urban metamorphosis: a walk to discover how Varese was and how it has become

Pubblicato: Domenica 28 Marzo 2021



*Today sees the start of a program which, every Monday, wants to tell you, with a virtual walk, about the transformations of the city in the last hundred years, since it became a provincial capital. These transformations are not always edifying, but by explaining the past, they can enlighten the present and the future. This was signed by Fausto Bonoldi, a historic signature of Varese journalism, who also wrote a book, “**Cara Varese come sei cambiata**”, published by Macchione, on this topic, which Fausto has been debating for years in the Facebook group **La Varese Nascosta**.*

The first stage of the “virtual walk” is in Piazza Monte Grappa, where OVS is now located.

Almost a century has passed since Varese, a pleasant city enclosed in the bend of the Vellone torrent and surrounded by the six districts, lying on their seven hills, is starting to change.

The Royal Decree of 2nd January 1927 was the break between the old city enriched since the 18th Century from the “ville di delizia” of the Lombard aristocracy and then it became an esteemed place of vacation, and the one we know today that promoted Varese to the rank of administrative centre of province.

The need to give the city an adequate size to the new role involved the aggregation to the council area of nine neighbouring municipalities, Bizzozero, Bobbiare con Schiranna, Capolago, Lissago, Masnago, Sant'Ambrogio Olona, Santa Maria del Monte, Velate e Induno Olona which, however, regained its autonomy in 1950.

Under the urbanist profile, the effects of the “promotion” were the demolition and reconstruction of half of the old town centre, to open the new Piazza Monte Grappa, and the construction of some public buildings typical of a county seat, during the Fascist period, such as the Casa del Fascio or Palazzo del Littorio (that is now the central police station), courthouse and the central post office.

Equally important changes in the “urban landscape” were made after Mussolini’s dictatorship, in the 1950s and 1960s, when the lack of culture and the speculation caused irreversible damage to the historical building heritage.

Hence one of the biggest wounds, done by the Democratic Republic during the Regime, we can go on a virtual walk in the old and actual Varese: many of you, like me, are wondering how the ancestors of Varese could delete the elegance of the way out in the square of Corso Roma (today dedicated to Aldo Moro,) accentuated by the white tram and the cabriolet of the same colour.



Between the 1800s buildings (I wonder how beautiful they would be if they were preserved and restored) today we can “admire” the monumental INPS office that was built to order by the architect Mario Loretì in 1939 according to the standards of the most conceited 20th Century, and the OVS shop that was constructed for the Standa in the early 60s.



And about the glass building, designed by the archistar Luigi Mattioli, I'd love to point out that I don't criticize the architectural value, but rather the fact that it was built where Casa Romanò was, that today would provide an elegant extremity to the side of the avenue, which luckily is preserved and restored.

Translated by Elisa Cairone, Vittoria Bonanomi, Michela Villa

Reviewed by Prof. Robert Clarke