

VareseNews

Urban metamorphosis: The “sacking” of Casa Sacco, which was struck by the virus of ignorance

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Every Monday, on a virtual walk, the column “Urban metamorphosis” talks about the transformations that the town of **Varese** has undergone in the last one hundred years, that is, since it became the Capital of the Province. The column is written by **Fausto Bonoldi**, a historic figure in Varese journalism who has covered this topic for years in the Facebook group **La Varese Nascosta** (“The Hidden Varese”) and who has also written a book, published by Macchione, entitled “**Cara Varese come sei cambiata**” (“Dear Varese, how you’ve changed”).

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Urban metamorphosis, eighth instalment: The “sacking” of Casa Sacco and the virus of ignorance.

The gloomy page of the “sacking of Varese” was written by the municipal administrators who, at the beginning of the 1960s, decided to demolish the house where **Luigi Sacco** was born, in the street named after the **pioneer of smallpox vaccination**.

The building, where the great doctor was born on 9 March 1769, was sold by the Sacco Family to Gaspare Ghirlanda, who, in 1808, commissioned the architect Francesco Peverelli to rebuild the front, which we can see in the period photo.



In 1873, another eminent doctor from Varese, **Eugenio Medea**, a pupil of the first Italian Nobel Prize winner, Dr **Camillo Golgi**, was born in this elegant building... on the side of his wife, **Lina Aletti**. The value of the building, the two happy events that dignified it and, above all, the fact that the Casa Ghirlanda overlooked the street named after Luigi Sacco, had little effect on the town's administrators, who authorised its demolition to make way for the construction of the new headquarters of the Bank of Italy.

Designed by **Ignazio Gardella**, one of the most highly regarded Italian architects of the 20th century, the building was constructed between 1962 and 1966 and inaugurated in 1967. Ironically, half a century later the downsized Bank of Italy closed the Varese branch, leaving the building empty.



A plaque placed on Casa Ghirlanda in 1869 and torn off before the demolition, to be placed on the new building states that “In this house (the demolished one, *ed.*) Dr Luigi Sacco was born on 9 March 1769. The Municipal Council, on the first centenary of his birth”.

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