



## COMO – PATH 5 – THE MODERN CITY WALK

### STAGE 1 – FROM SANT’ELIA NURSERY SCHOOL TO PIAZZA DEL POPOLO

#### INFORMATION

**Point of departure:** Como, Sant’Elia Nursery School (via Alciato)

**Point of arrival:** Como, Piazza del Popolo

**Path type:** urban route

**Environment:** urban area

**Total length:** approx. 2200 m

**Travel time (on foot):** 45 min

**Difficulty:** tourist

**Rise:** -

**Maximum height:** 225 m

**Paving:** asphalt, porphyry cubes, stone slabs

**Public transport to the point of departure:** ASF city bus service; “Como Borghi” Trenord railway station in Piazzale Gerbetto

**Public transport from the point of arrival:** ASF bus service; “Como Lago” Trenord railway station in largo Leopardi; boat

**Parking at the point of departure:** parking available in the surroundings

**Points of interest:** Asilo Sant’Elia (Sant’Elia Nursery School), Case Popolari (Council Houses), Casa Cattaneo Alchieri (Cattaneo Alchieri House), Casa Pedraglio (Pedraglio House), Casa del Fascio (Fascist Party Headquarters), Sede dell’Unione Fascista dei Lavoratori dell’Industria (Headquarters of the Fascist Union of Industrial Workers), Fontana monumentale (Monumental Fountain), Villa per un floricoltore (Villa for a floriculturist)

#### DESCRIPTION

The route begins from the entrance of the **Sant’Elia Nursery School**, in via Alciato 15, designed in 1936-1937 by the architect Giuseppe Terragni. The nursery school was commissioned by the Congregazione di Carità (*Congregation of Charity*) of Como and designed in 1936-1937 by Como architect Giuseppe Terragni. The school building is U-shaped and stands near a large working-class quarter built – starting in 1914 - by the Società Cooperativa Edificatrice (*Cooperative Building Society*). After admiring the school’s façade, turn right and continue along the porphyry cube pavement, which, after running along via Alciato, after ten metres or so makes a left turn into via dei Mille. The first section of the pavement borders the right hand-side wall of the Rationalist building and the adjacent beautiful green area where the children can play. As you continue walking you will border the first “Cruyff Court” ever to be built in Italy, dedicated to the late football player Stefano Borgonovo. It is a special artificial-turf football pitch sponsored by the Johan Cruyff Foundation and the Stefano Borgonovo Foundation.

The Johan Cruyff Foundation finances sports projects for children with disabilities, including by building “Cruyff Courts”, i.e. small football pitches open to the public, where principles such as respect, health, integration, development and cooperation are being followed and promoted. In addition to its main objective of supporting research on amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (a disease that hit Como player Stefano Borgonovo and led to his untimely death), the Stefano Borgonovo Foundation promotes youth football activities. The football pitch is next to municipal garden. After approx. 200 metres, turn left at the traffic lights and cross via Leone Leoni on the pedestrian crossing. Turn left and continue along the street’s wide asphalted sidewalk for a further 110 metres, then turn right into via Francesco Anzani, keeping onto the sidewalk. Eighty metres down the road you will find on your right, at number 34, the high five-storey block of one of the two **Council Houses**, built in 1938-1939 according to a plan by Giuseppe Terragni and Alberto Sartoris.

As you walk along the route you may also see the side of the other building, parallel to the first, and catch a glimpse of

its façade from the gate on via Anzani. Continue for another 20 metres, turn left and cross via Anzani on the zebra crossing, then step onto the porphyry cube pavement on the opposite side of the street. Continue by turning right into via Magenta and follow it for about 90 metres. Once you reach the traffic lights cross the street on the pedestrian crossing. Past the corner of the block, turn left and reach the traffic lights, which are equipped with audible traffic signals. Two successive pedestrian crossings will allow you to cross the two lanes of via Ambrosoli, separated by an asphalted corridor cut into the traffic island flowerbed. Walk along the sidewalk on the right of via Mentana (please note that the asphalt on this section of the sidewalk is mainly uneven), and, after about 130 metres, cross via Morazzone on the pedestrian crossing. A further 60 metres down the road you will find to your right, at number 25, **Casa Cattaneo Alchieri**, a six-storey building designed by Pietro Lingeri in 1936, which stands opposite what is now the school building of the “Istituto Pascoli”.

After approximately 170 metres, bend slightly to your right and, at the traffic lights, cross via XX Settembre on the pedestrian crossings; continue along via Mentana (from here onwards the sidewalk is made of porphyry cubes) for about eighty metres, and, on the opposite side of the road, at number 6, you will find **Casa Pedraglio**, a typical bourgeois residence built in 1935-1937 according to a plan drafted by Giuseppe Terragni. After another 40 metres, bend slightly to the right, cross via Giulini on the zebra crossing, and continue along via Mentana, again using the porphyry cube sidewalk on the right hand-side of the road. Approximately sixty metres down the road you will start to walk alongside the large Market Hall complex, built between 1932 and 1934 according to a plan by Milanese architect Mario Levacher, which the Municipality of Como preferred to those drafted by Gianni Mantero and brothers Giuseppe and Attilio Terragni, all of whom were exponents of the rationalist movement and based in Como. To your left, at the very bottom of the street, you can see the side wall of the former church of San Francesco (*St. Francis*), now used by the Municipality of Como as a space for exhibitions and cultural events. At the crossroads bend slightly to the right and, having reached the traffic lights, cross via Cesare Battisti on the pedestrian crossing. On the other side of the road, right next to the traffic lights, you will find a bus stop for urban routes 1 (Chiasso - Ponte Chiasso - Como - San Fermo / New Hospital), 5 (Como FS Railway Station - Caviglio), 6 (Maslianico - Breccia), 7 (Sagnino - Como - Lora), 11 (Sagnino - Bassone), and suburban route C50 (Como - Olmeda - Cantù). Turn right and continue along the wide porphyry cube strip which borders the southern side of the medieval walls of Como. The walls are also called Frederician, as they were built in the second half of the twelfth century by order of the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa. Please note that on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays this strip is occupied by market stalls. Once you reach the 14<sup>th</sup> century pentagonal Tower of S. Vitale, turn left and walk under the lower arch in the walls, opened in 1929 to let trams through. After approx. 10 metres a second arch will let you into via Nazario Sauro.

Turn left, taking the street's porphyry paved sidewalk, which in its first section borders a green area with benches adjacent to the eastern side of the city walls. After about 260 metres, turn right and cross via Sauro at the pedestrian crossing, which leads to the “Trenord Rail” level-crossing and railway tracks (the crossties and ballast in this section of the railroad are covered in asphalt). Past the railroad, turn right, and, after about 5 metres, cross via Lecco, again on the pedestrian crossing, then turn left and continue for a further 30 metres until you reach an alley called Passaggio Beata Giovannina Franchi (1807-1872), dedicated to the founder of the Nursing Sisters of Our Lady of Sorrows.

Turn right and take the concrete walkway that runs slightly uphill through the basement of the Valduce Multi-storey Car Park, from where you will be able to have a close look at an interesting archaeological site with some Roman-era ruins, thought to be part of a spa in existence between the second half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD and the late 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD. The walkway leads you to via Dante, where you turn left and continue on the sidewalk (the first section of which is paved with porphyry cubes, followed by an asphalt surface) for about 40 metres, until you have to cross a narrow street. Continue to walk straight on along the sidewalk that borders the eastern side of a municipal garden, and go past the newsstand, the bus shelter for suburban routes C40 (Como-Erba-Lecco), C43 (Como-Ponzate), C45 (Como Inverigo-Cantù), C46 (Como Merate-Bergamo), C47 (Como-Casatenovo-Merate), C49 (Como-Erba-Asso), C50 (Como - Olmeda - Cantù), and the bus stop for urban route 4 (Cemetery - Como FS Railway Station - Camnago Volta - Campora). At the end of the sidewalk, turn right (please mind the small iron post). Cross the two lanes of the road on the single pedestrian crossing which cuts into a low and narrow traffic island between the lanes, turn left and continue on the other side of the road for a few metres, then bend to the right (please mind the small posts) and cross via dei Partigiani at the zebra crossing.

Once on the opposite side of the street step onto the ramp – approx. five metres wide – linking the road to the large piazza paved with stone slabs in front of the **Casa del Fascio**, universally recognized as a masterpiece of Italian rationalist architecture. The building was designed by Giuseppe Terragni in 1932 and completed in 1936, and is currently the H.Q. of the Como Province Finance Police.

Looking westwards from this square you can enjoy a view that is the outcome of almost a thousand years of history and art in Como. Beyond the tracks of the “Trenord” railway you can admire, from left to right: the medieval walls, the neoclassical building of the Municipal Theatre, the Renaissance style apses of the Cathedral, the dome of the church of S. Giacomo, the bell-tower of the church of S. Provino, and the 15<sup>th</sup> century Pantera Tower. On the other hand, when looking eastwards, the green hill of Brunate, with the Funicular climbing its steep slopes, acts as a scenic backdrop to the famous building.

After appreciating the white façade of the Casa del Fascio, you may return to via dei Partigiani and continue along the street's sidewalk, which is initially paved with stone slabs before turning to porphyry cubes. From here you can easily feel with your own hand the Casa del Fascio's marble facing and concrete-framed glass block inserts, plus feel the depth of the splays of the windows. Continue for a 100 metres, then turn left into via Lega Insurrezionale (asphalt

sidewalk), and, after a further 40 meters, left again into via Pessina (porphyry cube sidewalk), completing a circle around the complex built to host the **Headquarters of the Fascist Union of Industrial Workers**, now used as the premises of the Local Health Authority for the Province of Como. The building was erected between 1938 and 1943 according to a plan drawn by Cesare Cattaneo, Pietro Lingeri, Luigi Origoni, Augusto Magnaghi Delfino, and Mario Terzaghi (the main entrance is at number 6 of via Pessina). Cesare Cattaneo was also responsible (together with Mario Radice) for the design of the **Monumental Fountain** which, since 1962, has been standing at the centre of Piazza Camerlata, an important crossroads on the outskirts of town. The quarter of Camerlata hosts, too, another interesting rationalist building, the **Villa for a floriculturist**. Located in via Pasquale Paoli at no. 49, the villa was built between 1936 and 1937 according to a plan drawn by Giuseppe Terragni. The Villa and the Fountain can be reached from the city centre by bus.

A further ninety metres along via Pessina will take you back to the piazza paved with stone slabs in front of the **Casa del Fascio** in Piazza del Popolo.