



MONUMENTO AI CADUTI DI COMO (COMO WAR MEMORIAL)

You can find this point of interest in Como - Path 5 - Stage 2

INFORMATION

Location: the War Memorial is in viale Puecher in Como

Paving: the large piazza which precedes the War Memorial is paved with stone slabs; the steps and the landing are made of stone, too

Architectural barriers: to access the piazza which precedes the monument one has to climb a low step. Eighteen steps lead to the landing from where one may access the Sacellum, the sides of which are unprotected. An inner 140 step staircase with its original handrail leads to the terrace at the top. Another inner staircase leads downwards to the crypt

Access: access to the War Memorial is from viale Puecher

Services: parking available in the surroundings; bike-sharing docking station

Leisure and Food: bars and cafes in the area; sports facilities; public park with children's playground

Other information: the terrace at the top is enclosed by a parapet, which is approx. 1 metre high. However, ropes have been placed along its perimeter in order to enhance safety and prevent people from getting too close to the parapet.

DESCRIPTION

The Como War Memorial is an imposing 33 metre high tower with large windows, resting on a grandiose base and soaring towards the sky. It is clearly visible and recognizable from a distance, and stands in remembrance of the many young lives sacrificed for the Nation, and as a warning to prevent the atrocities of war. The structure is made of concrete, covered in a variety of stone: the base is in ocellar gneiss blocks, the floors in Piedmont granite (from the Alzo quarries), the steps in Montorfano granite, while the exedras on the sides are made of beola stone and Moltrasio Limestone. The tower is entirely lined in Carso limestone, coming from the Aurisina (the same as used for the Miramare castle in Trieste) and Repen quarries. The façade overlooking viale Puecher carries the engraving «*With the stones of the Carso the city glorifies its sons*», while the engraving on the façade overlooking the lake says «*Tonight we shall sleep in Trieste or in heaven with the heroes. 10 October 1916 - Antonio Sant'Elia*», i.e. the words that Sant'Elia is believed to have spoken on the eve of the battle during which he lost his life.

From the entrance you may access the true "core" of the monument: the Sacellum of the Fallen, occupied by a massive block of Alzo white granite (8 x 1,70 x 1,20 metres), which carries the names of the 750 soldiers from Como who died in the First World War and some of those who died in the Second. A staircase located on the right of the Sacellum leads to the crypt, which hosts the altar and the ossuary, made in the Nineteen-Sixties to hold the remains of the soldiers from Como who lost their lives in the Second World War, who were later transferred to Como's Monumental Cemetery. The crypt hosts, too, another Alzo granite slab with the names of other soldiers fallen during the Second World War.

A further narrow 140 step staircase with its original handrail leads from the sacellum to the terrace, from where one can enjoy: to the north, a spectacular view over the first basin of the lake; to the east, Mount Brunate with the Funicular; to the south, the city of Como; and, to the west, the Spina Verde park with the Baradello Castle. A lift was built on the west face of the monument, furnished in the style of the time, and, although it can still be seen, it has never been used.

In 1926 the Municipality of Como announced a competition for the creation of a War Memorial, initially to be erected in an area adjacent to the Broletto, at the core of the city. The winning project was submitted by Mario Asnago and Claudio Vender, but it was immediately put on hold due to strong opposition and criticism.

In 1930 Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, who founded the futurist movement, came to the opening of the exhibition set up at the Broletto in Como in honour of Sant'Elia, and suggested to build the monument using a 1914 sketch of a "lighthouse-tower" for an "electrical power plant" designed by the great futurist architect from Como. Luigi Negretti, who was the "podestà" at the time, liked the idea, and entrusted to the futurist painter Enrico Prampolini the task «*of translating into drawings on a large scale, interpreting the plan and giving a rough estimate of the cost for the marble required*». Attilio Terragni, assisted by his brother Giuseppe, was asked to be in charge of the construction work and, after Prampolini had given up the idea, was entrusted with the «*artistic responsibility for the project*». The two brothers

radically modified the original plan.

The final result demonstrates how the initial “Futurist premise” of the structure turned out to be something which Giuseppe Terragni himself evaluated as «*now plainly Rationalist and Purist*». The works ended in 1933, and the monument was inaugurated on November 4th, on the anniversary of the end of the First World War, an Italian victory in more ways than one.