



## VILLA MEDA

You can find this point of interest in Canzo - Path 1 - Stage 2

### INFORMATION

**Location:** the complex of Villa Meda spreads along both banks of the Ravella stream.

**Paving:** the strip under the porch immediately after the main entrance is paved in stone for approx. 8 metres; the inner courtyard is paved with porphyry cubes. The park walkways are mainly gravel but the parking space on the left bank of the Ravella is asphalted. However, the pathway indicated in our itinerary is made of porphyry cubes.

**Architectural barriers:** information on accessibility is available in the description of Stage 2.

**Access:** the monumental entrance of the villa overlooks Via Meda; Piazza San Francesco and Via Gajum offer secondary accesses opened into the old perimeter wall of the property which lead to the parking area.

**Services:** part of the park has been turned into a large parking area, with access from Via Gajum.

**Leisure and food:** bars and restaurants in the area.

### DESCRIPTION

*(Silvia Fasana)*

The neoclassical style villa was designed by architect Simone Cantoni, who transformed a country house into the residence of the Meda family between 1795 and 1804. A folder with Cantoni's original drawings is kept at Canton Ticino's historical archives in Bellinzona (CH): the designs show different architectural solutions, both for the internal structure of the building, and the garden and outdoor appurtenances. It is a composite plan complex, built around a main courtyard with an arched portico supported by square pillars at the side of the entrance. The rooms inside the villa contain frescoes and eighteenth-century coffered wooden ceilings decorated by Luca Roscio from Vill' Albese. From another smaller courtyard (see the description of Stage 2) one can visit what was probably the chapel of the villa, left unfinished, and inappropriately called the Baptistery due to its circular plan, with a central stone colonnade and octagonal wooden vault. Beyond the main courtyard, on the right bank of the Ravella stream, was the park (which is believed to have been planned as an Italian garden, with a refined two-niche nymphaeum), linked to the other bank by means of a picturesque stone bridge. The perimeter wall of the property, in undressed stone, was embellished with turrets and aediculae. The building was later used in the 20<sup>th</sup> century as a summer camp for the Stellite in Milan (an orphanage for girls, the female equivalent of the *Martinitt*), and as barracks during the Second World War. In 1983, the Municipality of Canzo bought the complex from Stellite; after a long period of restoration, it was converted into private homes and public rooms, housing a number of Canzo's Associations and the Public Library.