



## CASE POPOLARI (COUNCIL HOUSES)

You can find this point of interest in Como - Path 5 - Stage 1

### INFORMATION

**Location:** the Council Houses are located in Como, via Anzani 34

**Paving:** the pavement next to the entrance is surfaced with asphalt. Beyond the low concrete enclosure wall, opened by two small iron gates, a narrow concrete strip precedes the five granulated-concrete steps which lead to the first landing

**Architectural barriers:** five steps lead to the first landing

**Access:** access is from the entrance of via Anzani 34

**Services:** parking available in the area; automated teller machine in via Anzani

**Leisure and Food:** bars, cafeteria and restaurants in the area; municipal garden

**Other information:** the building hosts private homes and is therefore not open for visits.

### DESCRIPTION

The Case Popolari (Council Houses) of via Anzani, designed in 1938 by Giuseppe Terragni and Alberto Sartoris, were built by the IFACP (Fascist Autonomous Institute for Council Housing) in 1939. This project was in fact a very small abstraction from a more ambitious plan of Rationalist scope drawn up by the two architects (a “utopia of poets”), consisting of a working-class satellite quarter for 3000 people at Rebbio, with six-storey houses and one and two-storey houses arranged in rows, within a network of orthogonal roads, comprising all the main services, a stadium, sports facilities, schools, a church, the seat of the Autonomous Fascist Institute for Council Housing (IFACP) and Fascist Party, as well as green areas.

The via Anzani buildings were constructed in order to receive part of the inhabitants who had been forced to leave the old Cortesella quarter - which stood in the area now occupied by a square, piazza Peretta, and a street, via Boldoni - following its demolition due to the “urban renewal” intervention brought about by the Municipality’s new Town Plan (1937). However, the transfer of Cortesella’s inhabitants to the via Anzani complex was in contrast with an important objective of rationalist architecture, i.e. to provide an answer to the actual needs of the population. On the contrary, the Municipality, by carrying out this intervention, had answered the needs of the real estate companies and the IFACP, thus starting the process of pushing members of the lower social classes out of the old core of Como.

Of the three buildings planned by IFACP for via Anzani, only two were actually built, « one of four floors, and the other two floors plus the ground floor. The maximum simplification of the finishing was attempted with success, also due to the need to keep the costs down, and variations were made in the distribution of space regard to the optimal plan foreseen for the residential units at Rebbio. Nevertheless the two houses stand out as original within the spectrum of houses built by the IFACP. There is a clear intention to visually connect the house to the garden; the garden was conceived as a replacement for the usual courtyard of working-class houses, allowing for an efficient daylight exposure of the main rooms of both houses. The pursuit of a pattern of full and empty spaces on the façades, furthermore underscored by the railing strips on the balconies, is difficult to distinguish today due to the modification of the plaster and of the colours» (L. Cavadini, *Architettura razionalista nel territorio comasco*, Provincia di Como, Como 2004).