



“GIOSUÈ CARDUCCI” INSTITUTE AND “THE HALL OF THE NOBEL PRIZE WINNERS”

You can find this point of interest in Como 6 – Stage 1.

INFORMATION

Location: The “Giosuè Carducci” Institute is in Como in Viale Cavallotti 5 and 7

Paving: the sidewalk along the avenue is made of grit concrete tiles (edged on the sides by two bands of porphyry tiles), while at the entrances there are bands of porphyry tiles. Beyond the low concrete fence wall, surmounted by an iron gate and opened by iron gates, at number 5 a porphyry tile driveway precedes an area in grit concrete bordered by a stone band below the portico, while at number 7 a narrow concrete band precedes the stone step of access to the interior

Architectural barriers: An elevator is available to reach the first floor, where the Sala del Museo Didattico is located.

Access: the building at number 5 is accessed through an iron and glass door

Services: parking available in the area (**viale Varese**); Multi-storey car park in via Rubini; city and suburban bus stops nearby; pharmacy in via Garibaldi; ATMs in Via Rubini

Leisure and Catering: bars in the area; public gardens in Viale Varese

Other information: the “Guido Casartelli” Museum in the Sala dei Nobel (Hall of the Nobel’s) can be visited **by appointment only, for groups, and subject to availability**. For information, contact the Carducci Association tel 031.267365.

DESCRIPTION

(by Silvia Fasana)

The “Giosuè Carducci” Institute was erected on the initiative of Enrico Musa with a project by the architect Cesare Mazzocchi. The building, with a triangular plan, inaugurated on September 20, 1910, was the seat of the "Pro Cultura Popolare" Association, founded in 1903 by a group of moderate democratic intellectuals from Como, including Musa himself, to promote the culture of the working classes. After ten years, the spaces were enlarged with the construction of a new adjoining building with a U-shaped plan, connected to the first by a small portico with a terraced roof. The complex was also equipped with a large garden equipped with a vegetable garden and enriched with valuable plants and recreational environments, including a pond with a bridge and a cave with an aquarium (which became part of the municipal zoo from 1937 to 1987). On the whole, a lot of very successful initiatives of the Association were held, such as technical, commercial, but also artistic and cultural training courses. The Institute was the seat of a Library for adults and a Library for children, two Popular High Schools, a Music Library, a School of Musical Culture, a School of Decorative Art, a Shorthand Classroom, a School for Housewives named after Romualdo Borletti (associated with the well-known sewing machine factory) and a nursery school where the Montessori method was applied. Above all, a small but very peculiar museum was established. The idea of a circulating Science Museum (or school museum) came to the

president/founder of the Carducci institute Enrico Musa in 1917, following the example of the Swiss school organization that rented auxiliary educational material to various school groups. He therefore decided to commission a specialized Parisian company, Maison Deyrolle, to create a complete miniature modelling and visual equipment for the teaching of all the scientific subjects included in the curricula of middle school and technical institutes, including seven sectors (Physics, Chemistry, Electrical Engineering, Natural History, Hygiene, Philately, Numismatics, Technology and Commodities). This teaching kit, which could be used by teachers to make their lessons more effective, was placed in special containers to make it easy to transport and then make them available to those who needed them. The catalogue of the museum's teaching materials was published in 1922, and the loan of teaching materials became active from 1923. Musa also adapted a large room in the new wing of the Carducci building (built in 1920) as a study room, furnishing it with large cupboards with glass doors and large drawers, to house all the teaching material and named the room, according to the custom of the Institute, in memory of Guido Casartelli (1864-1915), former vice-president of the Carducci Institute. To make the appearance of the place more attractive, Musa commissioned the painter Achille Zambelli (Vigevano 1876-Gravedona 1963) to fresco the walls and ceiling with images reproducing part of the content of the educational collection, with special reference to animals and nature. The composition included some medallions with portraits of protagonists of Como culture, but things went differently, due to an important event, the International Congress of Physicists held from 12 to 17 September 1927, organized by the Municipality of Como on the Voltian Year, to celebrate the first centenary of Volta's death. Twelve Nobel Prize winners participated in the congress, including Guglielmo Marconi (1909 Prize), Max Planck (1918 Prize) and Niels Bohr (1922 Prize). Among the participants there were also very young scientists, including Enrico Fermi, future "boy from Via Panisperna" and in turn future Nobel Laureate. To commemorate the exceptional event, their names were written in four medallions, erasing the images already imprinted previously. From that moment on, the Casartelli Room was called the "Hall of the Nobel Prize winners" and remained inextricably linked to the memory of the Voltian Year. After careful restoration, it continues to keep and exhibit in the original cabinets all the extraordinary educational material commissioned by Enrico Musa and now used exclusively for museum use. Following the financial crisis, in 1929 Pro Cultura decided to sell the headquarters of the Institute to the Municipality, which transformed it into the Fascist Institute of Culture, in cohabitation with the Magistral Institute, which occupied most of the classrooms. Currently, the most recent building of the institute has become the headquarters of the Faculty of Law of the University of Insubria; the other building, the oldest one, still houses the headquarters of the "Giosuè Carducci" Association, heir to the "Pro Cultura Popolare".