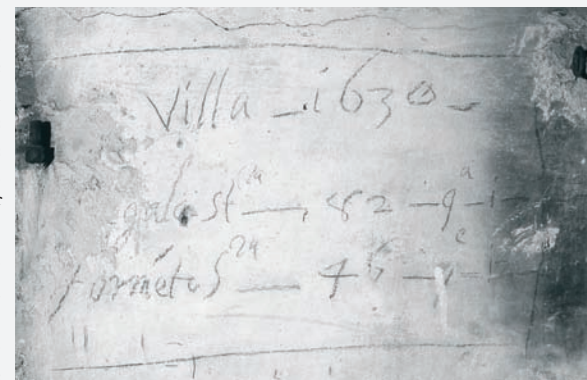


the Della Planta through marriage at the end of the XV century and the Houck house, near the church of Santa Croce. This was erected by the Architect Piotti for Giovan Andrea Della Croce, Archpriest, in 1580. It is quite possible that the actual town hall was once the headquarters of one of the Archpriest's brothers.

It is a very elegant building, which emerges along the irregular, medieval contours of the town, prominent in its stance on the road which was once the "main square" facing the edge of the lake. Very probably there was a bordered garden in the front, which gave access to the main door which can still be seen to-day, with ashlar work almost identical to that of the palace and the Della Croce coat of arms². Access by way of an entrance hall which opened onto the courtyard is strangely placed at the extreme south, perhaps because it had to respect the pre-existent building, as suggested by the irregular form of the plan³, which reveals an acute angle imperceptible in the raised part.

During the XVII century the attics, above the main room, were used for grain storage. This is attested by numerous writings giving the measures and quantities of rye⁴, "formento" and oats, one of which is still preserved at the far, north end of the internal wall.



After a period where little is known about the various owners, the Palace was bought by the town of Riva in 1876 with the intention of turning it into the principal headquarters of the town and schools⁵; numerous modifications were made especially to the interior. The main part of the structural interventions was concentrated on the part overlooking the courtyard, whilst in the "noble" body of the palace the entrance hall was closed to form a room, two windows under the porch were enlarged to become doors, two windows in the big room on the first floor were closed thereby joining the cornice of the 16th century fireplace to the wall for decorative reasons.

The north part of the courtyard already had a porch with four arches, probably dating back to the 18th century; after purchase by the town it was raised to make another apartment⁶. In 1926 the white colour on the outside from the 19th century, was substituted by an intense yellow which characterised the external aspect of the Palace until recent restoration.

The first mandate in preparing plans was in 1985. In 1989 the architect, Durisch, was employed, who requested an archaeological search during which the dendrochro-

ronological samples established that the construction dated to 1570. In 1989 the Town acquired the rustic which closed the courtyard to the west; part of the totally isolated medieval body. On the ground floor was a stable, with two other rooms on the upper floor. Following a series of consultations regarding plans work was assigned to Lino Caldelari di Mendrisio, architect, who decided to maintain practically intact and to restore as much as possible the original state of the entire 'noble' body, especially the stairway, which on closer historical research was found to be original with the steps being from the 20th century. All modern services were moved to the north side. The attic was turned into the archive.

The entrance hall is reopened, whilst the porch is preserved to the south, even though from the 19th century, (once the latrines), to accord the modern aspect of the courtyard, where the rustic is also restored harmonising the openings. Further interventions were necessary on the

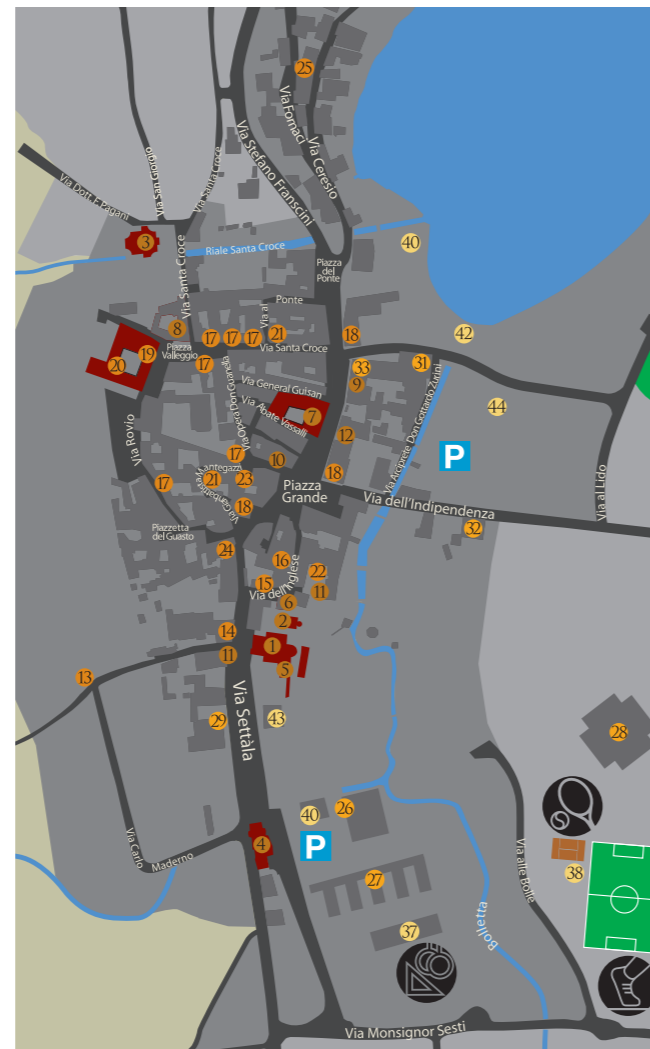
foundations and on the front of the porch, whose arch, lower towards the south reveals damage due to subsiding of the pillar⁷ over the centuries. All floors, modified frequently over the years, must be redone, by using locally produced terra cotta tiles. Herring bone design, taken from the original, has been reproduced for

the atrium. All the windows and doors have been redone and are based on the originals. To prevent arching of ceilings various methods have been used⁸: tie beams on the ground floor, hidden in the facings of the beams of the main room on the first floor and bars parallel to the trusses in the attic, used as a room, by placing a slab to compensate for inclination towards the road. The roof itself, though not original, has been largely redone, and the small dove cote in the centre has been restored⁹. The fire-places have been correctly repositioned, though not functional. In the courtyard as well as the porch a floor in 'bushhammered Saltrio' stone will be laid, inclined outwards to favour the flow of water. It will be painted in its original colour, with the white cement and the grey around the cornices restoring to the building its late renaissance, equilibrated elegance.

Testi: Anastasia Gilardi, 2007

Foto: archivio comunale, Riva San Vitale e Print Grafica, Mendrisio

Grafica e stampa: Tipo Print, Mendrisio



Beni Culturali

Iscritti nell'elenco cantonale

- 1 Chiesa arcipretale di San Vitale
Reperti archeologici e strappi d'affreschi
- 2 Battistero di San Giovanni
- 3 Tempio di Santa Croce
- 4 Oratorio di San Rocco
- 5 Oratorio di Santa Maria
- 6 Casa arcipretale
- 7 Palazzo comunale
- 8 Casa Houck, già della Croce
- 9 Facciata della casa già Neuroni
- 10 Affresco (frammento)
- 11 Chiave d'arco
- 12 Portale bugnato (con stemma della famiglia della Croce)

Altri beni non segnalati in quanto non accessibili

Edifici e contesti storici

- 13 Portale del muro di recinzione
- 14 Facciata ornata da dipinti
- 15 Portale giardino
- 16 Tipologia di casa agricola (non accessibile)
- 17 Portali
- 18 Facciata
- 19 Portale simmetrico (entrata Istituto San Pietro Canisio)
- 20 Istituto San Pietro Canisio (Pregio architettonico)
- 21 Perimetro murario
- 22 Casa Ruchat (valore architettonico ed ambientale)
- 23 Tipologia di casa con cortile e loggiato
- 24 Casa patriziale
- 25 Fornaci di laterizi (testimonianza storica)



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