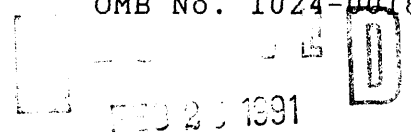


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM**

**NATIONAL  
REGISTER**

=====

1. Name of Property

=====

historic name: VILLA FRIULI

other name/site number: DeMichiel House

=====

2. Location

=====

street & number: 58 High Street

not for publication: N/A

city/town: Torrington

vicinity: N/A

state: CT county: Litchfield

code: 005

zip code: 06790

=====

3. Classification

=====

Ownership of Property: private

Category of Property: building

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>7</u>	<u>1</u>	buildings
<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	sites
<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	structures
<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	objects
<u>7</u>	<u>1</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this  X  nomination   request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  X  meets   does not meet the National Register Criteria.   See cont. sheet.

John W. Shannahan 2/20/91  
Signature of certifying official Date  
John W. Shannahan, State Historic Preservation Officer

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property   meets   does not meet the National Register criteria.   See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register Barbara Savage 4-11-91  
  See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register    
  See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain):

Barbara Savage 4-11-91  
Signature of Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic: DOMESTIC Sub: multiple dwelling  
INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION other: contractor's yard

Current: SOCIAL Sub: civic  
DOMESTIC single dwelling

7. Description

=====

Architectural Classification:

Italian Renaissance  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Other Description: N/A

Materials: foundation STONE roof ASPHALT  
walls STUCCO other BRICK  
STONE

Describe present and historic physical appearance. X See continuation sheet.

=====

8. Statement of Significance

=====

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: local.

Applicable National Register Criteria: A,C

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) : N/A

Areas of Significance: ARCHITECTURE  
SOCIAL HISTORY  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Period(s) of Significance: c.1915-1935

Significant Dates: 1915

Significant Person(s): N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Guarda, Ferruccio (Fred) - architect  
DeMichiel Brothers - contractor  
\_\_\_\_\_

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above. X See continuation sheet.

=====
9. Major Bibliographical References
=====

X See continuation sheet.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- \_ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
\_ previously listed in the National Register
\_ previously determined eligible by the National Register
\_ designated a National Historic Landmark
\_ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
\_ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- \_ State historic preservation office
\_ Other state agency
\_ Federal agency
\_ Local government
\_ University
\_ Other -- Specify Repository: \_\_\_\_\_

=====
10. Geographical Data
=====

Acreeage of Property: approx. 1 1/4

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing
A 18 655220 4629400 B \_\_\_\_\_
C \_\_\_\_\_ D \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description: \_\_\_ See continuation sheet.
The nominated property includes Lots 1 and 21, Block 15, Map 110, Torrington Assessor records.

Boundary Justification: \_\_\_ See continuation sheet.
The boundary includes all the property associated with the DeMichiel house and contractor's yard in the period of significance.

=====
11. Form Prepared By
=====

Name/Title: Bruce Clouette and Matthew Roth, Reviewed by John Herzan, National Register Coordinator
Organization: Historic Resource Consultants Date: July 6, 1990
Street & Number: 55 Van Dyke Avenue Telephone: 203-547-0268
City or Town: Hartford State: CT ZIP: 06106

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Description	Villa Friuli (DeMichiel House) Torrington, CT	7-1
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Villa Friuli, a large 2 1/2-story, hip-roofed house built in 1915 (Photographs 1 and 2), occupies a corner lot at the intersection of High Street and Central Avenue in Torrington, Connecticut. Built of terra cotta tiles, the exterior walls of the house are stuccoed and painted a brownish gray. To the rear of the house are several related outbuildings (Photographs 6 through 10) which were formerly used in the contracting business of the original owners, John and Matthew DeMichiel. They are included as part of the nominated property.

The symmetrical arrangement of the four-bay High Street facade (Photograph 1) reflects the house's origins as a two-family dwelling. There are two entrances in the center, each retaining its original oak door with oval beveled glass and sidelight glazed with green opalescent glass (Photograph 3); wide three-part, shallow-arched windows to either side; and on the second floor, two sets of paired windows flanked by single windows. A large portico, its hip roof and stuccoed exterior repeating the materials of the main house, shelters the entrances. To either side of the portico is a terrace with a railing of turned balusters and large urns atop the corner piers. The side elevations (Photograph 2) have two small diamond-pane casement windows and a bay window on the first floor. Other windows are fitted with small-pane upper sash and single-pane lower sash. On each slope of the roof is a hip-roofed dormer. Across the back of the house (Photograph 6) is a 2-story porch in the same materials as the house. There are two end chimneys and one central chimney, each with decorative corbeling and cylindrical terra cotta flues extending above the brick.

Among the house's architectural ornamentation are paired stick braces under the eaves of the main roof and portico roof; these spring from consoles carved with various faces and geometrical designs (Photograph 4). The rough-surfaced stucco of the exterior is punctuated by recessed rectangular red-painted panels. There are white-painted quoins on the first story of the house and on the portico. The front lawn is outlined by a granite curb carved to resemble the surface of tree trunks; at the southeast corner is a scroll-and-shield ornament carved with the initials "J.D.M." (Photograph 5). The steps up from the sidewalk have low granite newels incised with a floral design, the date of the house, and "58," the street address. The steps leading up to the portico stretch between stuccoed piers, upon which are another pair of large urns.

The exterior of the house is practically unchanged from its original appearance.<sup>1</sup> The original red diamond-shaped asbestos tiles of the

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Description	Villa Friuli (DeMichiel House) Torrington, CT	7-2
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roof have been replaced by ordinary shingles, and a balustrade around the roof of the portico is no longer in place. The balustrade had small urns at the corners and was incised with the name of the house, "Villa Friuli," in large letters.

The interior plan of the house continues the bilateral symmetry evident on the outside: the two sides of the house are almost identical. Immediately inside each entrance door is a vestibule with a coat closet. Then there is a small hall with the stairway to the second floor (Photographs 11 and 12). Ranged along each side of the house are a large parlor (Photograph 13), a dining room (Photograph 14), and a pantry. At the rear of the house there are two kitchens, now closed off but formerly connected to each other by a doorway which was always open. In between the front-to-back hallway and the demising wall are small rooms presently used for closets, a bath, and a stairway to the cellar.

The interior retains intact most of its original historical material. There are plaster walls and ceilings, hardwood floors, and oak cornices and window and door trim throughout the house. The stairways (Photograph 11) have paneled newels and turned balusters of oak, and lincrusta halfway up the wall. Separating the parlor from the hall is a wide opening (Photograph 12) framed by oak columns on high paneled pedestals and an intricate vine-motif filigree. There are several old or original lamp fixtures (Photographs 12 and 13); coved ceilings, central plaster ornaments, and elaborate brick and stone fireplaces (with huge consoles carved with swastikas) in the parlors (Photograph 13); and paneled oak sliding doors between parlor and dining room (Photograph 14). The second-floor rooms are much more plainly finished and served as bedrooms. The only major departures from the interior's original appearance are the lack of the dining rooms' cut-glass chandeliers and the substitution of a modern clock within the north parlor's chimneypiece.

The house currently is being used as offices on the south side and as a residence on the north. Consequently, the south kitchen has been made into an office and the pantry is used as a work space and file room. Parts of the formerly unfinished attic have also been converted to office space, and small skylights have been added around the roof.

The buildings at the rear of the property include a small office with stuccoed walls, quoins, and hip roof echoing the details of the main house (Photograph 6); a large rubblestone stable (Photographs 7 and 8);

United States Department of the Interior  
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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Description	Villa Friuli (DeMichiel House) Torrington, CT	7-3
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a stone two-bay jerkinhead-roofed garage with a loft above the doors (Photograph 9); and a small stone gable-roofed building, part rubble and part ashlar, which served first as a bakery and was later used for storage (Photograph 10). The 2-story jerkinhead-roofed stable has large paneled sliding doors on the south end and east side elevations, with round-arched openings on the second-floor level. Although partly partitioned within, the stable retains evidence of horse stalls such as iron rings and the names of former occupants painted on the beams. A stone ell, formerly a blacksmith shop, extends off the northeast corner of the stable. A shed-roofed frame appendage on the front of the ell is less than 50 years old<sup>2</sup> and is counted as a noncontributing building. The ell connects the stable to a concrete block and stone shop building (Photograph 9), which formerly adjoined another shop building of which only the east wall now stands. The bakery was built slightly earlier than the house, probably about 1910, the stable, ell, and garage at about the same time as the house, and the office and shop building somewhat later, but before 1928.

NOTES

1. Photographs in the possession of family members show the house shortly after completion.

2. The frame appendage is not shown on the Sanborn insurance survey of 1949.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Significance	Villa Friuli (DeMichiel House) Torrington, CT	8-1
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Summary

Villa Friuli is a rich historic resource filled with meaning for architectural history, the story of Torrington's development as a pluralistic, industrial city, and the social history of ethnic groups in Connecticut. In fact, these strands of significance are inextricably linked. Architecturally, on the most basic level, the house stands as an exceptionally well-preserved and representative example of the Italian Renaissance mode, a revival style which occurred throughout early 20th-century America (Criterion C). More specifically, however, Villa Friuli represents the pinnacle of the Italian-American house, a distinct architectural type which had a substantial impact on the appearance of residential areas throughout Connecticut, wherever large numbers of Italian immigrants settled.<sup>1</sup> Historically, the house has significance because of its original owners, John and Matthew DeMichiel, brothers who were among the first Italian families to settle in Torrington. The DeMichiel brothers became successful contractors, and they played central roles in the social life of Torrington's Italian-American community (Criterion A). Living side by side as prosperous businessmen in their large house on High Street, the DeMichiels also exemplified the small but influential group of Italian-Americans who paved the way for acceptance into Connecticut society.

Architectural Significance

Villa Friuli embodies the distinguishing characteristics of the Italian Renaissance style, one of the various eclectic revival styles popular in the early 20th century. Among these characteristics are an overall symmetry, stucco exterior, hip roof, bracketed cornice, and balustraded elements. The style appeared in everything from multi-family tenements to mansions, with Villa Friuli, as the home of thriving entrepreneurs who worked for their living, situated toward the upper-middle-class part of the continuum. As such, the house demonstrates the type of high-quality detailing -- carved brackets, oak woodwork, fixtures, hardware, bevel-cut and stained glass, patterned chimney flues -- which was available in the period. The house also is significant for the extent of its well-preserved interior features, many of which reflect the Craftsman aesthetic of the period. The use of stained oak; the simplicity of the cornice moldings, paneled doors, and dining room shelves (Photograph 14); and the earth colors, natural materials, and archetypal designs<sup>2</sup> evident in the fireplaces all reveal the Arts and Crafts influence on the building materials of the period.





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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Significance Villa Friuli (DeMichiel House) 8-3  
Torrington, CT

said to have carved the ornamental stone, such as the fireplace consoles and the bark-textured curbing. As practical businessmen, the DeMichiels also used their High Street property for their place of business, and the outbuildings which remain -- the office, stable for draft horses, shops for storing and repairing equipment -- are significant for recalling the hard work which underlay their success.<sup>5</sup>

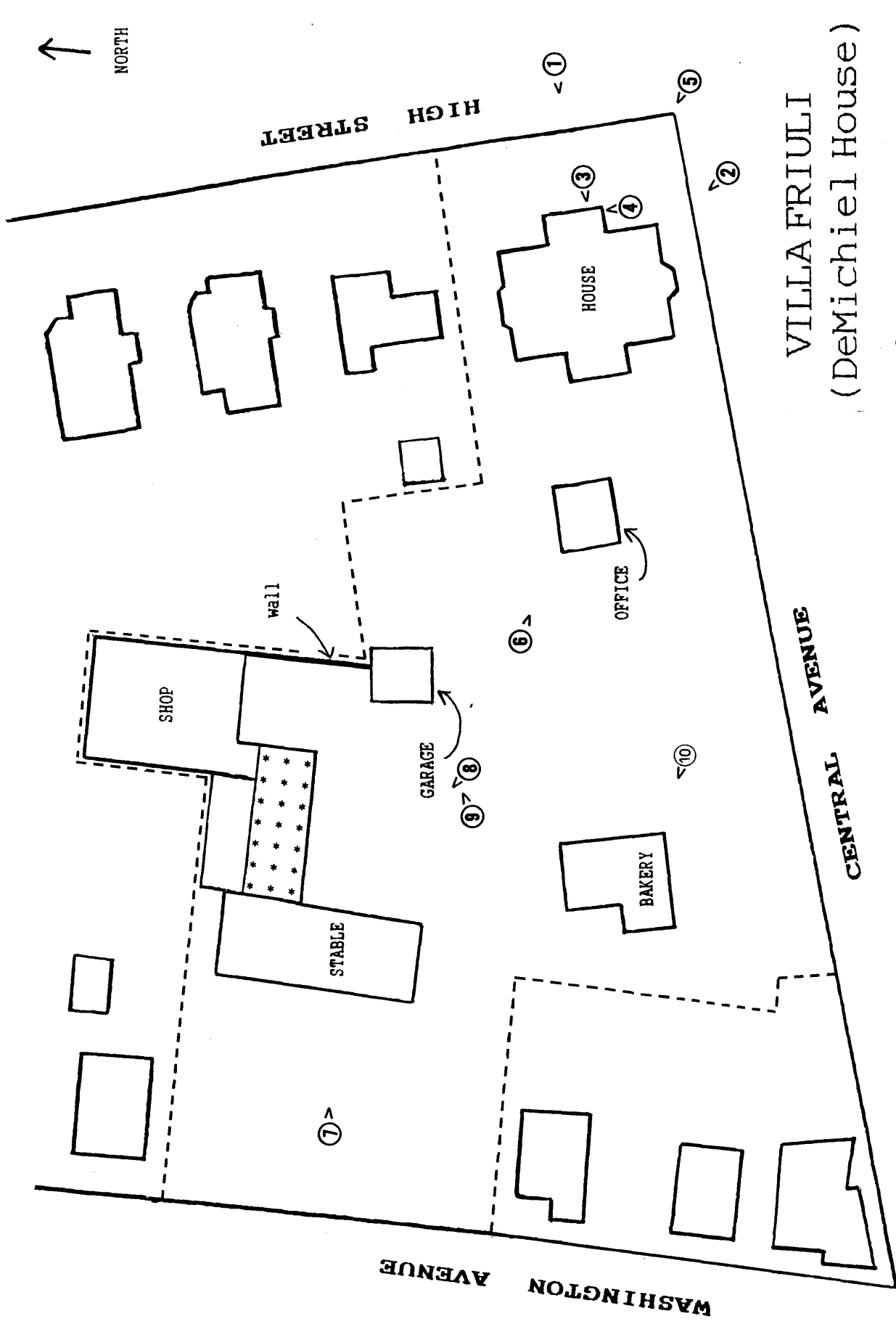
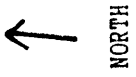
In its size and finely executed details, Villa Friuli symbolized the DeMichiels' achievement of middle-class prosperity, and with its name and architectural style it proudly proclaimed their Italian origins. At the time of their arrival there were only four Italian families in Torrington, but as the city's brass and other metalworking industries continued to expand, many more Italians settled there, becoming one of Torrington's principal ethnic groups. John and Matthew DeMichiel were instrumental in founding many of Torrington's Italian organizations, including the Sons of Italy and the Italian Labor Society. They were also major benefactors of St. Peter's, the Italian Catholic parish. In recognition of John DeMichiel's accomplishments both within the Italian-American community and Connecticut society at large, the Italian Government in 1933 awarded him the honor of the cross of the cavalier.

The DeMichiels also prospered as a result of their branching out into the road-building business. In the early 20th century, both local and state governments undertook large-scale road improvement programs, paving streets, building trunk roads to interconnect the state's cities, and replacing old bridges with spans that could accommodate the demands of burgeoning motor vehicle traffic. Italian-American firms such as DeMichiel Brothers were well-suited to the work: they had a tradition of working with masonry and cement, they already were dealing in stone and other building materials, and they could readily provide and supervise large numbers of unskilled laborers, a segment of the Connecticut work force which in this period was largely made up of Italian immigrants. Throughout much of Connecticut, Italian-American construction firms became major factors in road building and other public works in their regions.

Like many other Italian-American businessmen, John DeMichiel became allied with the political interests which controlled state government throughout the 1910s and 1920s. He was a founder of the Torrington Italian-American Republican Club and twice represented Torrington in the state legislature. He was also a director of the Connecticut Road Builders Association. By associating with some of the most powerful







VILLA FRIULI  
(DeMichiel House)

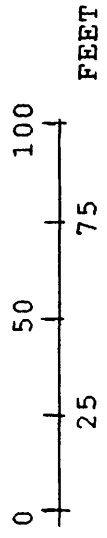
Torrington, Connecticut

<⑥ Photo Position

--- Boundary of Nominated Property

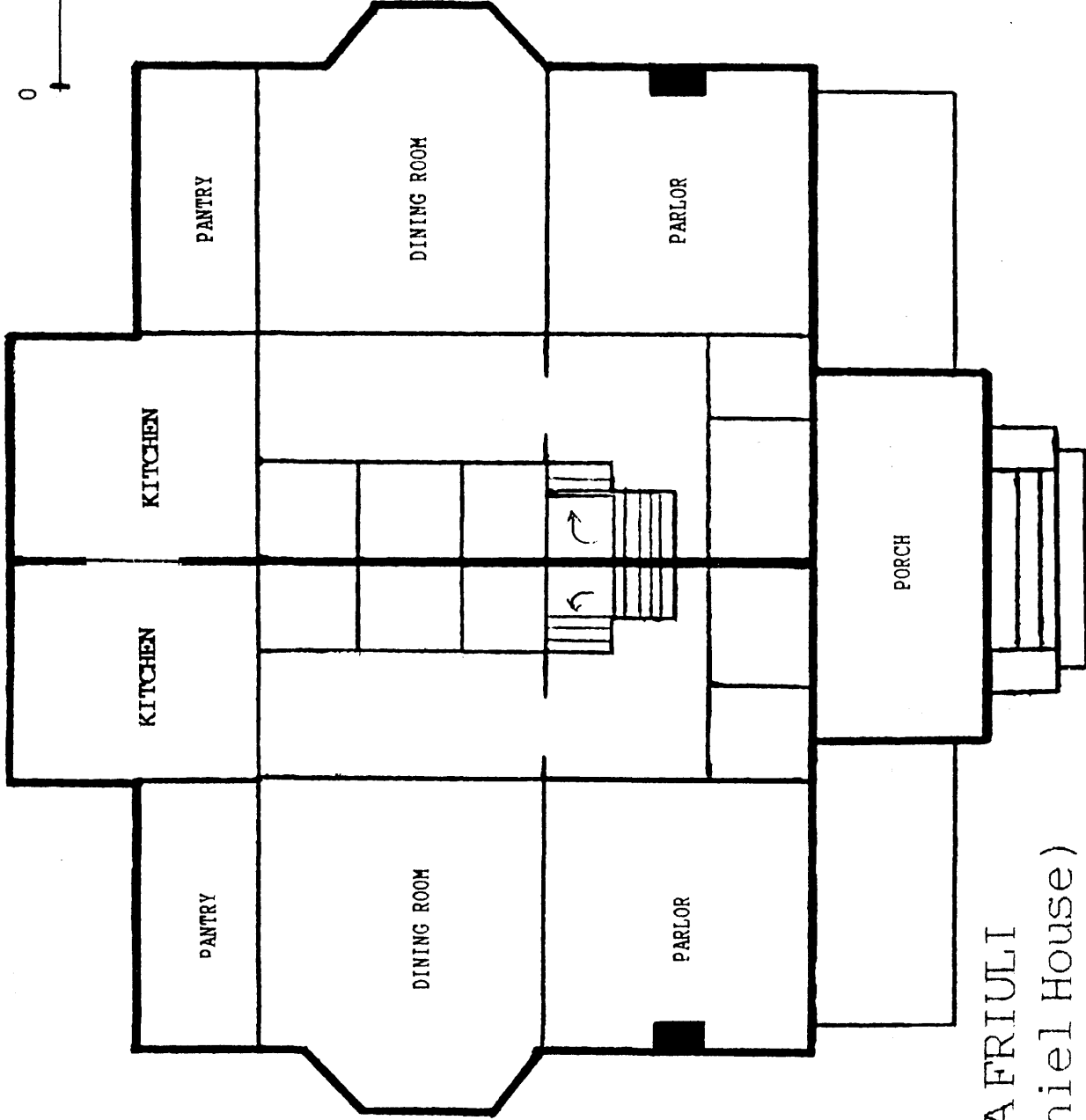
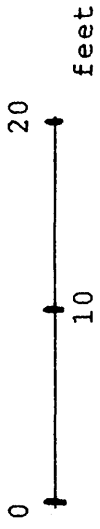
□\* Noncontributing

SCALE



SKETCH MAP OF SITE

APPROX. SCALE



VILLA FRIULI  
(DeMichiel House)

Torrington, Connecticut

SKETCH PLAN, FIRST FLOOR OF HOUSE



