NPS Form 10-900 (Rev. 8-86)	OMB No. 1024-0018
United States Department of the Interior National Park Service	LJ 7502;1991 LU
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: <u>58 High Street</u>	
	not for publication: <u>N/A</u>
city/town: Torrington	vicinity: <u>N/A</u>
state: <u>CT</u> county: <u>Litchfield</u> code	e: <u>005</u> zip code: <u>06790</u>
3. Classification	
Ownership of Property: <u>private</u>	
Category of Property:building	
Number of Resources within Property:	
Contributing Noncontributing	
7 1 buildings	sted in the National
Register: <u>0</u>	

r d

Name of related multiple property listing: _____N/A_____

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form

As the dependence of 1986, a request for standards Historic I set forth	Federal Agency Certification signated authority under the as amended, I hereby certify or determination of eligibil for registering properties Places and meets the procedu in 36 CFR Part 60. In my of not meet the National Regis	Nation That t ity mee in the In and opinion,	al Historic Preser his <u>X</u> nominations ts the documentation National Register professional required the property <u>X</u> teria. <u>See co</u>	vation Act on on of irements _ meets
	of certifying official mahan, State Historic Preservatio	n 066i aan	<u>2/20/91</u> Date	
	Federal agency and bureau	n officer		
In my opin	nion, the property meet criteria See continuat			National
Signature	of commenting or other offi	cial	Date	
State or 1	rederal agency and bureau			
	al Park Service Certificatio			===========
enter deter deter deter nat: remov	certify that this property ed in the National Register See continuation sheet. mined eligible for the onal Register See continuation sheet. mined not eligible for the onal Register red from the National Regist (explain):	er	both Savoy	4-11-9,
		Jusi.	gnature of Keeper	Date of Action
	on or Use			==========
	DOMESTIC INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRAC	Sub:	multiple dwelling	
	SOCIAL			

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form

7. Description
Architectural Classification:
Italian Renaissance
Other Description: <u>N/A</u>
Materials: foundation <u>STONE</u> roof <u>ASPHALT</u> walls <u>STUCCO</u> other <u>BRICK</u> <u>STONE</u>
Describe present and historic physical appearance. <u>X</u> See continuatio sheet.
8. Statement of Significance Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: <u>local</u> .
Applicable National Register Criteria: <u>A,C</u>
Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) : <u>N/A</u>
Areas of Significance: <u>ARCHITECTURE</u> SOCIAL HISTORY
Period(s) of Significance: <u>c.1915-1935</u>
Significant Dates: <u>1915</u>
Significant Person(s): <u>N/A</u>
Cultural Affiliation: <u>N/A</u>
Architect/Builder: <u>Guarda, Ferruccio (Fred) - architect</u> <u>DeMichiel Brothers - contractor</u>

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

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9. Major Bibliographical References
<u>X</u> See continuation sheet.
Previous documentation on file (NPS):
<pre>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 #</pre>
Primary Location of Additional Data:
State historic preservation office Other state agency Federal agency Local government University Other Specify Repository:
10. Geographical Data
Acreage of Property: <u>approx. 1 1/4</u>
UTM References: Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing
A <u>18</u> <u>655220</u> <u>4629400</u> B C D 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: <u>Bruce Clouette and Matthew Roth, Reviewed by John Herzan, National</u> Register Coordinator
Organization: <u>Historic Resource Consultants</u> Date: <u>July 6, 1990</u>
Street & Number: <u>55 Van Dyke Avenue</u> Telephone: <u>203-547-0268</u>
City or Town: <u>Hartford</u> State: <u>CT</u> ZIP: <u>06106</u>

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Villa Friuli (DeMichiel House) 7-1 Torrington, CT

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 2story 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.¹ 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)	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' cutglass 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);

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Description	Villa Friuli (DeMichiel House)	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. Α 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 old² 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.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Significance	Villa Friuli (DeMichiel House)	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.1 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 multifamily 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 designs² evident in the fireplaces all reveal the Arts and Crafts influence on the building materials of the period.

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Significance	Villa Friuli (DeMichiel House)	8-2
	Torrington, CT	

As persons involved in the building business, the DeMichiels would have been familiar with the Italian Renaissance style as practiced in America, but they had yet another reason for choosing it for their residence: it was a style which recalled the houses of their native Italy and proclaimed their Italian origins. Although it is far more elaborate than most, the house is closely related to the numerous brick and stone "Foursquare" houses erected by Italian masons throughout central Connecticut. These houses, almost without exception associated with Italian-American owners, are distinguished by their flourishes of masonry technique. They often combined different colors of brick, or brick with stone, stucco, or patterned concrete blocks. Quoins almost always appear at corners and sometimes at window openings to add to the distinctive appearance. Villa Friuli is part of this Italian-American tradition of virtuoso masonry: the prominent quoins, recessed panels of contrasting color, and rough-surfaced stucco set the house apart from the ordinary Italian Renaissance house of the period, which had a much more subdued appearance. Villa Friuli thus represents a large and finely detailed example of a genre which, without much recognition, enriches the built environment of many Connecticut cities and towns.

Little is known of the house's architect, Ferruccio (Fred) Guarda, whose influence may have been limited to drawing up the plans to the DeMichiels' specifications. At the time, Guarda was a draftsmen in the office of well-known Pittsfield, Massachusetts, architect Joseph Vance, and he later worked for the Pittsfield Blueprint Company. The Guarda and DeMichiel families were well known to each other. They may have met in Lee, Massachusetts, or perhaps have been related through intermarriage, or common village origin.³

John and Matthew DeMichiel

John and Matthew DeMichiel were both born in Castelnuovo del Friuli, Italy, and came to America in the 1890s as young men, first to Lee, Massachusetts, where they worked as stonecutters, a trade learned in Italy, and then to Torrington. Torrington was an expanding industrial city at that time, and their stonecutting skills were in demand for churches, civic buildings, and business blocks. Their first job was cutting the pillars for Torrington's new city hall. They formed the firm of John DeMichiel and Brothers (another brother, Peter, was associated with them for a time), and advertised themselves as "stone cutters, carvers, and dealers in building stone."⁴ The quality of their art is evident in Villa Friuli: the DeMichiels themselves are

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Significance	Villa Friuli (DeMichiel House)	8-3
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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.⁵

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

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Significance	Villa Friuli (DeMichiel House)	8-4
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among Connecticut's elite, entrepreneurs such as the DeMichiels helped counter then-popular negative stereotypes of Italians. The DeMichaels' funerals, which occurred less than six months apart in 1935, were attended by hundreds of people, including local Torrington leaders and representatives of the state government.

NOTES

1. William Devlin, in the Torrington townwide architectural survey, called Villa Friuli "the apex of the local Italian-influenced building tradition." Other town-wide surveys in Connecticut that identify a specifically Italian-American building type include those for Berlin, Hamden, and Plainville, Connecticut, so it clearly ought to be considered an ethnic, rather than a localistic, phenomenon.

2. The swastika was an ancient European symbol of prosperity which only later achieved its horrific association.

3. Telephone interview with Mrs. Lena Guarda of Lee, Massachusetts, June 18, 1990. Mrs. Guarda recalled frequent visits as a child to the DeMichiels in Torrington, but could not say what the connection was, nor what happened to Ferruccio Guarda.

4. Torrington City Directory, 1916.

5. One small building was used by friends of the DeMichiels for a bakery; the DeMichiels' company later used it for storage.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Bibliography	Villa Friuli (DeMichiel House)	9-1
	Torrington, CT	

- Bailey, Bess and Merrill. <u>The Growth Years: Torrington 1852 to 1923</u>. Torrington, 1976.
- <u>Commercial Record</u>, October 24, 1914, December 5, 1914, December 26, 1914, May 8, 1915.
- Devlin, William E. Architectural and Historical Survey of Torrington. City of Torrington/Connecticut Historical Commission, 1987.
- Obituary of Matthew DeMichiel. Torrington Register, March 18, 1935.

Obituary of John DeMichiel. Torrington Register, September 23, 1935.

Pittsfield [Massachusetts] Directory. 1914-1915.

Sanborn Map and Publishing Company. Insurance Maps of Torrington. New York, 1915, 1928, 1931, 1949.

Torrington Land Records, 49:73 (1902), 49:94 (1902).

Torrington Directory, 1915-1930.





SKETCH PLAN, FIRST FLOOR OF HOUSE

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Photograph captions	Villa Friuli (DeMichiel House)	Photos-1
	Torrington, CT	

All photographs:

 VILLA FRIULI (DeMichiel House)
Torrington, Litchfield County, CT
Photo Credit: HRC, Hartford, CT
June, 1990
Negative filed with Connecticut Historical Commission Hartford, CT

Captions:

Facade (east elevation), camera facing west Photograph 1 of 14

South elevation, camera facing northwest Photograph 2 of 14

Detail of left front entrance, camera facing west Photograph 3 of 14

Detail of quoins and brackets on porch, camera facing north Photograph 4 of 14

Detail of corner stone of front wall, camera facing northwest Photograph 5 of 14

Office at rear of house, camera facing southeast Photograph 6 of 14

Stable, Washington Avenue side, camera facing east Photograph 7 of 14

Stable, yard side, camera facing northwest Photograph 8 of 14

Garage, with wall (remnant of shop) to rear, camera facing northeast Photograph 9 of 14

Former bakery building, camera facing northwest Photograph 10 of 14

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Photograph captions	Villa Friuli (DeMichiel House)	Photos-2
	Torrington, CT	

Interior, left side, stairway, camera facing west Photograph 11 of 14

Interior, left side, stair hall, entrance to parlor on left, doorway to corridor on right, camera facing southwest Photograph 12 of 14

Interior, left side, parlor, camera facing south Photograph 13 of 14

Interior, left side, dining room, sliding doors to parlor on right, camera facing northeast Photograph 14 of 14