



The City of Seattle

Landmarks Preservation Board

Mailing Address: PO Box 94649, Seattle WA 98124-4649

Street Address: 600 4th Avenue, 4th Floor

LPB 151/23

REPORT ON DESIGNATION

Name and Address of Property: **Cettolin House**
4022 32nd Avenue SW

Legal Description: Lot 49, Block 8, Westholme, an addition to the City of Seattle, according to the Plat thereof recorded in Volume 22 of Plats, Page 51, records of King County, Washington.

At the public meeting held on April 19, 2023 the City of Seattle's Landmarks Preservation Board voted to approve designation of the Cettolin House at 4022 32nd Avenue SW as a Seattle Landmark based upon satisfaction of the following standard for designation of SMC 25.12.350:

- C. *It is associated in a significant way with a significant aspect of the cultural, political, or economic heritage of the community, City, state or nation.*
- D. *It embodies the distinctive visible characteristics of an architectural style, or period, or a method of construction.*
- E. *It is an outstanding work of a designer or builder.*

DESCRIPTION

Site and Neighborhood Context

The subject site is located in the Youngstown part of the Delridge neighborhood of West Seattle, mid-block on 32nd Avenue SW between SW Andover Street and SW Genesee Street. The parcel is rectangular in plan, measuring approximately 40 by 120 feet, oriented northwest-southeast—but for purposes of this report, the orientation of the lot will be considered to be east-west (and the front of the house will be referred to as the west facade). The site originally consisted of three lots, for a total site measurement of 120 feet by 120 feet, but in the 1990s, the two flanking side lots were sold off and houses built upon them.

Administered by The Historic Preservation Program
The Seattle Department of Neighborhoods

"Printed on Recycled Paper"

There is an alley along the east property line. The subject building is located in the western half of the parcel, allowing a small front yard on the west and a large rear yard on the east. The site slopes considerably, dropping approximately 29 feet from southwest to northeast property corner. Part of the rear yard is paved with a driveway coming up from the alley to the house, edged by retaining walls due to the slope.

The subject site is situated within two semi-isolated blocks of approximately 75-100 single family houses located on a shelf of land adjacent to, but 20-30 feet below, the busy Fauntleroy Avenue/West Seattle Freeway to the west, and about 15 feet above the SW Avalon Way arterial to the east. Although some houses on these blocks were developed in the 1920s-30s, most date to the 1940s through the 1970s. Fauntleroy Avenue leading to the southwest quickly becomes an automobile-oriented arterial, and leads to the central commercial heart of West Seattle, at the junction of California Avenue SW and SW Alaskan Way.

Two blocks to the northeast of the subject site is the large Nucor Steel Mill, and beyond it, the Port of Seattle's facilities along the Duwamish Waterway and Harbor Island. Directly east of the subject site is the north-south oriented valley of Longfellow Creek, across which eastward views from the subject house include the semi-forested western flank of the Pigeon Point hill.

While there are more than a dozen designated Seattle historic landmarks in West Seattle, most are located along California Avenue SW or on the west side of the peninsula near the waterfront. The only designated Seattle landmark within a half-mile of the subject site is the Cooper Elementary School (Edgar Blair, 1917, and Floyd Naramore, 1929 addition), originally known as Youngstown School, at SW Genesee Street & Delridge Way SW.

Architectural Description

House Exterior

The subject house is a one-story structure, with a daylight basement, over a daylight sub-basement (as such, the house appears to be three stories at the back, but one story at the front). Both the main floor and the basement measure approximately 29 by 31 feet in plan, resulting in about 900 square feet of living area per floor. The sub-basement is smaller, measuring 16 by 31 feet in plan.

The building is reinforced masonry (brick) construction, over a concrete foundation. The exterior is finished with high-quality stucco work employing a variety of stucco textures. Decorative stucco effects include faux-stone quoins, string courses, window trim, and a faux-stone watertable at the base of the front facade. The house features a hipped, nearly pyramidal roof, which was originally clad with red clay barrel tiles, but is now clad with asphalt composite shingles.

Windows are wood sash and deep-set in the walls, emphasizing the solid masonry construction of the house. The typical window is nearly square, and consists of four lites—a wide center fixed lite, flanked by two casements, all surmounted by a fixed leaded-glass transom lite that features a repeating tulip motif. These windows on the basement level occupy larger openings in the masonry wall, and rest on a recessed panel visible on the north and east facades. The majority of windows in the house, even smaller ones, feature the tulip motif transom. While all of the windows have been updated with energy-efficient glazing, the mullions are either original or match the original configuration and profile.

The front or west facade of the house derives considerable character from a centered, projecting front porch that is unusually fanciful and ornate. It was apparently the last exterior part of the house to be completed, and was finished in 1939. This flat-roofed porch measures 6 by 7 feet in plan, and features cast concrete balustrades on the sides. The balustrades are composed of classically inspired, vase-shaped balusters. Atop the balustrades at the corners are clusters of three vase-shaped baluster-like columns, which then support a heavy, multi-arched “entablature.” The corner columns of the upper tier have slightly more attenuated proportions than those in the balustrade below. The balustrade is cleverly designed as a solid stem wall on the interior side of the porch. All of the balusters used in the porch were hand-cast by Fausto Cettolin; the present homeowners still retain one of the wooden molds used to form them. All of the porch features are finished in smooth stucco; however, the corner-most porch columns have a rougher stucco texture, for decorative contrast.

The floor of the porch is a gray-colored terrazzo, and at the center is circular, petalled terrazzo form edged in metal dividing strips and colored red, pink, yellow, blue, and white. Around this element, in large serifed letters outlined with metal strips, and colored in blue and red, are the words “F. CETTOLIN, AUTORE,” (the latter word meaning “author,” or creator, in Italian).

The front porch is reached by a flight of seven concrete steps, retained on each side by shaped, curving edge walls that feature integral concrete urn-shaped planters on each side at the bottom of the run. The steps are concrete with fine, crushed-stone exposed aggregate (like the terrazzo), and the lowest section of pavement—between the urn planters—features the numbers “1939” (the year that the exterior of the house was finally completed) spelled out with metal dividers and lighter-colored aggregate.

The side facades of the house are two stories on the south and three stories on the north, reflecting the sharp drop in grade from the front to the back of the site. Windows are typically aligned in stacks. Stucco stringcourses identify floor levels. On the south facade is a projecting side entry porch, measuring 5 by 6 feet in plan. It was constructed by 1937 but probably a few years earlier. The porch features side balustrades supporting corner columns, similar to the front porch. The corner columns support an arched entablature, and a flat roof. Originally open, it was enclosed with wood framed glazing by 1961. At some point after the 1960s, a small storage room was built under the porch, at the sub-basement level, with a door accessed from the rear yard.

The rear or east facade is three stories and largely resembles the other facades in stylistic features. At the sub-basement level, there are two wide openings which were originally enclosed with wooden double garage doors. These two openings are not arched, but feature slightly arched header trim. In the 1990s, the wooden doors were replaced with full-height windows and sliding glass doors, and the upper part of these arched openings were infilled with quarry tile.

House Interior

Tax records indicate that the original interior finishes—which are largely intact—include hardwood or terrazzo floors; plaster walls and ceilings, often with picture rail; and wood trim at doors and most windows. Interior ceiling heights are 9 feet at the first and basement levels, and 8 feet 6 inches at the sub-basement.

Entering from the front porch and main entry, the first or upper floor is organized by a central corridor which extends the length of the house, from front to back. The corridor features diamond-patterned

terrazzo floors in dark browns, yellows, and reds, and a dark red terrazzo base trim. Along the corridor, steeply arched openings springing from wall pilasters occur at transition walls.

At the end of the corridor are windows in what was originally the living room that offer a view to the east, over the Delridge Way/Longfellow Creek valley and the hillside beyond. This room is now used as a bedroom. Off of this former living room is a sitting room, originally used by the Cettolins as a bedroom for the four girls. It has two non-original closets which were built out from the wall in the 1990s, but do not extend to the ceiling.

Other rooms along this corridor are two rooms at the northwest and southwest building corners, flanking the main entrance. Now used as a home office and bedroom, these were used by the Cettolins as the parent's bedroom and the boys' bedroom, respectively. A final room on the main floor is the bathroom, which was slightly updated in the 1990s, but still features original terrazzo floors and an elaborately trimmed, multiple-arch bathtub recess resembling the main arch on the front porch.

Carpeted steps from the first floor corridor lead down to the basement level, where the side porch/entry, the kitchen, the current living room, and another bathroom are located. The side porch/entry is enclosed, and features a terrazzo floor. The porch enters onto the kitchen, at the southeast building corner, which was remodeled in the 1990s but retains the original room size, and terrazzo floor with a 4-pointed star medallion in the center. Behind it, at the southwest building corner, is a bathroom that originally was a storage and laundry room which had a small stair leading to the sub-basement level.

Beyond the kitchen to the north is the living room, which was originally used as the dining room by the Cettolins, but only for special occasions (the kitchen was the location for their everyday dining). The living room features a terrazzo floor with a brown and beige checkerboard pattern, and green and red four-pointed star medallion at the center. However, the living room was altered in the 1990s with an expansion to the west, where arched wall openings lead to a dining area. At the same time, a fireplace and shelving—features which did not previously exist—were added along the south wall.

To access the sub-basement, stairs were added in the 1990s to the west side of the dining room. The sub-basement was originally used as a dirt-floored workshop and storage area for Fausto's construction materials, and part of it functioned as a cellar (reconfigured during renovations). It was referred to as the garage, although the Cettolins did not own an automobile. At present, the walls are exposed brick and the floors are concrete, and the space is used as a home office.

Garden Features

The original building site was 120 by 120 feet and consisted of three parcels, with the house at the center, but the flanking lots were sold off in the 1990s and houses built upon them. Garden features in the north and south yards are no longer intact, but some remain in the center parcel.

The north yard was used by the Cettolins for growing food, including a large vegetable garden, fruit trees (cherries, peach, plum, apricot, apple, and pear), grape vines, and chickens. Erma canned fruits and vegetables and stored them in the cellar.

The south yard was used for relaxation and featured lawns, flower beds, trees, and gathering areas. Numerous historic photos show that the entire south yard was terraced with a series of brick and stucco-

clad brick retaining walls, ranging from one to four feet in height. The retaining walls often incorporated bench seating. Several paved paths connected the levels. In the southeast quadrant of the original yard, Fausto built two concrete, terrazzo-topped outdoor dining tables—a square table, and a circular table that featured the words “F. Cettolin – 1950” in colored aggregate and binder, presumably recording the year of its completion. The circular table was surrounded by a circular cement or brick-and-stucco bench. At the southeast property corner, Fausto built a freestanding outdoor oven/BBQ station. Nearby was a large glacial erratic boulder that had always been on the property. Next to it, Fausto fashioned a small raised pond that included a perimeter planting trough, creating an ornamental focus for that section of the yard.

The rest of the south yard included garden beds near the house, including a bed of lilies (the national flower of Italy) which were given special focus. The southwest quadrant of the original yard included terracing, and another gate at the sidewalk, south of the main front gate. Marking the southwest property corner, Fausto planted a monkey puzzle tree in the 1940s, which remains intact in what is now the front yard of the neighbor’s house.

Original garden features which remain on the subject property include elements in the front yard, or directly adjacent to the house in the south side yard. In the front yard are the front entry gates from the sidewalk, which feature four low cast concrete columns supporting decorative wrought iron gates and fencing. Concrete steps at the southwest corner of the house access a concrete path that leads to the side entry porch. The concrete steps are edged by shaped brick and stucco sidewalls, and feature integral planters. At the southeast corner of the house is a curved brick retaining wall, which is surmounted with four planters in the form of concrete pots on top of cast concrete columns. One more of these distinctly vertical columnar planters appears at the south side of the top of the driveway.

Other garden features that exist at the present northeast property corner, behind the house, include steel tubs, woodchip paths, garden beds, and a greenhouse, which are not original, but were installed in recent years.

Summary of Primary Alterations

The subject building is largely intact, with only minor exterior and interior alterations over time; however, significant alterations have been made to the site (the parcel is now only one-third its original size).

The 1937 and 1944 King County Tax Assessor photographs, historic Cettolin family photos, historic building permits, and a visual review of the property provide information regarding alterations to the building.

Below are the major building permits related to the building:

Permit	Date	Est. Cost	Comments on Permit
261556	1926/10/15	\$4,000	To build residence per plan
276719	1928/05/02	\$3,000	To erect residence as per plan. Started under #261556
655059	1991	\$500	Remove unheated entry porch [work apparently not performed]

685537	1996	\$15,000	Remove portion of bearing wall, replace with beam & posts, remove & relocate stairs in single family residence per plan
--------	------	----------	---

After the exterior of the house was completed in 1939, Erma and Fausto Cettolin continued to live in the house until their deaths in the 1960s. Fausto continued to work on some interior features (such as the hardwood and terrazzo floors) into the mid-1940s, but primarily focused on his building projects in the yard and gardens. After Fausto’s death in 1969, his son Fausto Jr. lived in the house for approximately two decades, then sold the house, which was purchased in 1991 by a developer. The developer sold off the side yards as buildable parcels. In 1994, the house was purchased by Susan and Stuart Wexler, who undertook some renovations mainly to the interior but also to the exterior. In 2014, the house was purchased by the current owners, who have essentially made no alterations to the house.

Therefore, the most significant alterations to the property occurred during the 1990s:

- North and south side yards sold off and developed with new houses (1990s).
- House red clay tiles removed from roof and replaced with three-tab shingles (1990s).
- Sub-basement “garage” doors replaced with glazing and upper part of opening infilled with tile on exterior (ca. 1996)
- Interior: Arched wall at basement level installed, separating dining room from living room. Stair access from basement level to sub-basement level relocated. Kitchen renovated and updated. New bathroom installed at basement level, behind kitchen. (1996)

SIGNIFICANCE

The Development of Youngstown/Delridge

Early Context and the Duwamish

The Youngstown area is located in the shallow valley of Longfellow Creek, near the creek’s mouth on the east side of the West Seattle peninsula. The larger neighborhood today is called Delridge, along the east side of the West Seattle peninsula. Longfellow Creek is separated from the larger Duwamish River valley and mouth by the Pigeon Point ridge. All of this area is part of the lands that had been inhabited by the Duwamish—a subgroup of the indigenous Coast Salish People—since the retreat of the glaciers over 10,000 years ago.

Numerous locations along the West Seattle peninsula and the mouth of the Duwamish River were historically identified by the Duwamish with place-names. An important village called Herring’s House (*Tóó7ool7altxW*) was located on the east side of Pigeon Point, near the mouth of the Duwamish River. Another village site along the river—apparently abandoned by the 1770s but uncovered by the Port of Seattle in the 1970s—was called Basketry Hat (*yul’éqWad*), near the site of today’s Herring’s House Park. Close to the subject site, near the mouth of Longfellow Creek, was a place called Smelt (*t7áWee*), where shell middens indicate it had been the location of a fishing camp and shellfish gathering site dating to at least 700 years ago. Further along the shoreline to the north were Place of Waterfalls (*dxWtSútXood*), the site of another shell midden; Caved-In (*asleeQW*), at the foot of a steep unstable bluff; and Low Point (*sgWudaqs*), now corresponding to Duwamish Head, which was a key fishing beach and the site of a large boulder covered with petroglyphs.

Initial white European exploration and mapping of the area occurred ca. 1770s-90s, establishing European names for existing landforms and waterways, such as Puget Sound. The Europeans also brought smallpox and other diseases, which within a few years had severely impacted the indigenous population. By the early 1800s, small numbers of white Euro-American settlers began to colonize the area, and were primarily engaged in fur hunting and trading with the indigenous population. As an effort to encourage settlement by white Americans in the area, the United States established the Oregon Territory in 1848, and created the Donation Land Claim Act in 1850, followed by the Homestead Act in 1862.

During the 1850s, the US federal government began to negotiate treaties with the Coast Salish tribes in order to consolidate land for white colonial settlers. At that time, the Duwamish gave up more than 54,000 acres (comprising of much of today's King County, including West Seattle) in exchange for hunting and fishing rights, and agreed to remove to reservation land. In September 1851, some of the first white Euro-American settlers to the present-day Seattle area—the Denny Party—arrived at Alki Point. The Duwamish, led by Chief Seattle (*Seeathl*), interacted regularly with the Denny Party and helped them survive the difficult winter that followed. By 1853, the Denny Party moved to a new location near present day Pioneer Square—known to the Duwamish as Little Crossing-Over Place (*sdZéédZul7aleech*), and the site of an abandoned longhouse—where the settlement eventually developed into the city of Seattle.

By 1857, as pressure from white Euro-American settlers increased, the Duwamish and other indigenous people throughout the Duwamish/Lake Washington and Upper Puyallup River areas moved to the Port Madison Reservation in Kitsap County or the Muckleshoot Reservation near present-day Auburn. However, many Native people chose not to move, and instead remained in Seattle due to strong cultural ties to the area. Although they were sought by the white townspeople for their labor and trade, deep-seated prejudices by the white settlers flared repeatedly over the decades.

In West Seattle, these tensions flared in 1893 with the burning of the old Duwamish settlement of Herring's House, by then occupied largely by elderly Indians. Rapid growth in Seattle after the arrival of the railroad in the mid-1880s, and development after the 1889 Great Fire, pushed white settlers outward, including towards what became West Seattle. The Herring House fire (set by a white man identified in the newspapers only as "Watson") was part of a broader, ongoing pattern of brazen actions whereby Indian properties would be seized, razed, and developed by white townspeople.

Youngstown

The area west of Pigeon Point began to be settled by white Euro-Americans in the 1880s. An early industry was the establishment of a Puget Mill Company sawmill on what was then called Young's Cove near the mouth of Longfellow Creek, adjacent to the Duwamish River tideflats. Other industries developed to the north, along what is now Harbor Avenue, including a salmon cannery and shipbuilding yards. In 1895, the Corps of Engineers began dredging the Duwamish River and filling tideflats in the vicinity, which attracted more industries. Around 1903, a post office designated with the placename Humphrey was established.

In 1903, white Seattle industrialists William Pigott (1860-1929) and Judge Elliott M. Wilson (1846-1927) purchased the 55-acre sawmill property and transformed it into the Seattle Steel Company, taking advantage of its waterfront location and expected future rail lines to the area. In 1905, the site began

operation as an open-hearth steel mill, largely producing reinforcing bar from scrap metal. Pigott renamed the location Youngstown, after the Ohio steel-producing city. Within a few years, the mill was expanded, making it for a time the largest steel-making facility in the Pacific Northwest. In 1913 the company became Pacific Coast Steel, and in 1929, Bethlehem Steel.

The mill employed hundreds of workers, including many immigrants, making the nearby blocks essentially a “company town.” The workers lived in rooming houses, homes that the company provided, or homes they built themselves. Besides housing, the area developed taverns catering to the around-the-clock schedules for the mill workers, and neighborhood businesses developed around Andover Street and 24th Avenue (later renamed Delridge Avenue). The steel company built a school at 23th Avenue and Genesee Street for the workers’ children, known as the Youngstown School. By 1906, the local residents were motivated enough to form the Youngstown Improvement Club, which petitioned the city for neighborhood improvements. By 1923, the club was headquartered in a permanent building at 24th Avenue and Hudson Street.

At the same time that Youngstown was beginning to be developed in the 1880s, the settlement called West Seattle was developing around the Admiral area. It was connected to Seattle by ferry and a dock at the foot of the bluff, near present-day Seacrest Park. The area grew steadily, but lacked infrastructure. In 1902, West Seattle incorporated as a city in order to issue municipal bonds to develop what would be the first municipally owned streetcar system in the country. The line operated along California Avenue until 1906, when it was sold to the Seattle Electric Railway Company. In 1907, the City of West Seattle—along with Youngstown and other areas on the peninsula—was annexed into Seattle’s city limits in 1907, for better electric, water, sewer, and fire protection services.

With the 1907 annexation, streetcar lines connected Youngstown to West Seattle and Seattle, on trestles above the Duwamish mudflats along the line of present-day Spokane Street. The line extended through Youngstown and up the hill towards Fauntleroy, crossing the original California Avenue line at Alaska Street. By 1911, rapid residential and commercial expansion at the intersection resulted in the area being called “the Junction,” which grew quickly into the commercial heart of West Seattle.

In 1913, Avalon Way near the subject site was regraded to accommodate vehicular traffic navigating the steep hillside from Spokane Street up to Alaska Street and the Junction.

During the 1920s and 1930s, significant growth in West Seattle continued, but Youngstown remained a working-class neighborhood in contrast to the middle-class developments along California Avenue on the hill to the west. The steel mill continued to dominate the neighborhood, but residents diversified, finding work in fishing, canneries, flour mills, at Boeing, and with other Seattle employers. In 1924 and 1930, two modern concrete and steel bascule bridges, and other grade separating improvements, were constructed along Spokane Street, replacing the wooden bridges and trestles spanning the Duwamish River. Over the years, the tideflats were filled, and the port grew on the north side of Spokane Street.

The original, small Youngstown School was demolished and replaced with a 1917 building that later received a larger brick addition in 1929. Youngstown Playfield across the street from it was originally developed around 1912 and received improvements in the 1920s. In the 1930s, Youngstown parents successfully petitioned the school board to change the name of the school to the Frank B. Cooper School, after a white, progressive Seattle school superintendent (the property is today a designated Seattle landmark). Neighborhood residents also persuaded the city to pave 24th Avenue and rename it

Delridge Way in 1940. Afterwards, other neighborhood locations were renamed Delridge, such as the playfield.

In the mid-1930s, a large, 207-acre vacant property south of Avalon Way, which had been owned by the Puget Mill Company since the late 1800s, was developed into the West Seattle Golf Course and West Seattle stadium. The construction of the site and buildings was provided by the federal Works Progress Administration (WPA), and was completed in the early 1940s.

In the early 1940s, the United States entry into World War II led to extensive economic and construction activity in Seattle, particularly in the industrial areas near Harbor Island and the Duwamish River. Temporary housing for wartime steel mill workers was built at the north end of Delridge Playfield and in nearby empty lots. The few Japanese-American families living in Delridge were sent to internment camps. The wartime influx of workers and military brought an increased ethnic and racial diversity to Seattle's population, including Delridge, due to significant numbers of Filipino and African-American servicemen and industrial workers. In 1947, Thelma Dewitty was hired to teach at the Frank B. Cooper School, becoming the first African-American teacher hired by Seattle Public Schools.

Into the 1950s, what had been a high incidence of home ownership in Delridge declined, and the number of renters increased.

In the early 1960s, Fauntleroy Way was regraded to accommodate traffic that had been increasing since the construction of the Spokane Street Viaduct in 1947, and was expected to grow further with the completion of the new Interstate 5 highway at the base of Beacon Hill. The work, completed in 1962, required the condemnation of dozens of properties along the widened Fauntleroy right of way, one block uphill from the subject site. Traffic levels on this roadway increased again with the 1978-1984 construction of the Jeannette Williams Memorial Bridge, the current high-span bridge which replaced the earlier, mid-20th century drawbridges over the Duwamish River.

In recent decades, census tract information for the subject site indicates that the population has grown from 3,658 in 1990 to 6,257 in 2020. The Cooper School closed in the 1990s and was converted to the Youngstown Cultural Arts Center. Seattle Public Utilities and neighborhood volunteers have undertaken improvements and restoration to Longfellow Creek, a salmon-bearing stream. The Nucor Steel Plant, successor to Bethlehem Steel, still operates at the same location and still produces re-bar.

Fausto Urbano Cettolin, Owner, Designer, and Builder

The designer and builder of the house was Fausto Urbano Cettolin, who with his wife Erma was also the original owner of the property. Fausto was born in 1890 and grew up in Pianzano, Italy, a village within the rural township of Godega di Sant'Urbano. The area, in the agricultural plains at the foot of the Italian Alps, is located in the province of Treviso and is approximately 65 miles northeast of Venice. In 1890, the nation of Italy had only been in existence for a few decades, and the mountains a few miles north of Pianzano were part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, not Italy as they are today.

Little is known about Fausto's early life or education. He was the oldest of seven siblings in a large family headed by his parents Luigi and Maria. As a young man, he apprenticed in Pianzano with a builder, and in fact listed his occupation in 1913 as a plasterer. In his early 20s, he served 27 months in the Italian military as a corporal major with the 7th Infantry regiment, and fought in the Italo-Turkish War of 1911-1912. Late in the war, his leg was seriously injured while fighting in the Battle of Derna on what is now

the northern Libyan coast, and for this he was awarded the Silver Medal for Military Valor in March 1913. With the injury, he was considered to have completed his service and retired from the military. Less than one year later, he emigrated at age 23 to the United States.

Fausto departed in August 1913 travelling in steerage on the ocean liner *SS France* from Le Havre, France, arriving in New York at Ellis Island. He then travelled to join his older brother Giovanni (who had left in March 1913) in San Mateo, California. By 1917, Fausto was working as a laborer at the large Pacific Coast Steel mill in the city of South San Francisco, and Giovanni was employed as a carpenter for Henry Maier, a prominent landscaper in the wealthy Bay Area suburb of Hillsborough.

By 1919 or 1920, Fausto had moved to Seattle and was living in a boarding house in the Youngstown (now Delridge) neighborhood. He likely began working at the large steel mill that dominated the Youngstown neighborhood at this time. Although the mill was established by William Pigott in 1905 as the Seattle Steel Company, by 1913 it had merged with the San Francisco-based Pacific Coast Steel Company, and operated as its sister mill. This connection may have been a reason facilitating Fausto's move from San Mateo to Seattle.

While living at the Youngstown boarding house around 1920, Fausto met Erma Dina Monti, a fellow Italian who had emigrated with her mother from Livorno, a large port city near Pisa, in November 1913. Erma, born in 1899, was the youngest of twelve siblings. Her father, who worked as a water carrier for wealthy families that lived on a hillside, died while she was young. Erma's older siblings in Italy were too poor to take them into their homes, so Erma and her mother came to live with Erma's brothers and sister in Seattle. City directories indicate that in 1920, Erma and her mother lived in Youngstown a few blocks from Erma's brother Giuseppe, who had immigrated a few years earlier.

In September 1921, Fausto and Erma were married. Between 1922 and 1929, they were listed in city directories residing at three addresses, all presumably rentals--3405 30th Avenue SW, 4008 24th Avenue (now Delridge Way) SW, and 2813 SW Dakota Street—and all within a few blocks of each other, and the subject property. By 1929, city directories list Fausto and Erma Cettolin at the subject address.

Fausto began work on the subject house within a few years of their marriage. Tax records suggest that Fausto purchased the subject property on August 31, 1928, but building permits indicate that he began building the house in 1926. The inconsistency perhaps indicates an earlier actual purchase date, or the Cettolins may have leased the property for a period before buying it.

The Cettolins also began to build a family after their marriage, with the birth of son Ricardo in 1923, and daughters Gloria and Norma in 1925 and 1928. By 1929, when they had moved into the still-unfinished house, Fausto Jr. had also been born, and the family numbered six. In a few more years, the family would grow with the addition of daughter Erma (called Dee Dee) born in 1933, and Virginia in 1935. The four girls slept in one bedroom, and the two boys in another. Virginia Cettolin does not recall her parents talking about their own histories very much, but does remember that they would speak to each other in Italian after the children had gone to bed.

Fausto worked as an open hearth boss at the Bethlehem Steel Mill a few blocks away, walking to and from work via the side door of the house and down the alley. Because the mill operated on three shifts throughout an extended day, his schedule varied from week to week—sometimes working days, other times working at night. In his spare time after work, on weekends, and on holidays, Fausto was able to

construct the house. The exterior was finally completed in 1939, but interior work continued on and off until the mid-1940s, before Virginia Cettolin was in high school.

During the 1940s through the 1960s, Fausto turned his attention to the yard, building numerous paths, brick retaining walls, stucco-covered benches, terrazzo tables, a barbeque, and installing garden beds. Virginia noted that gardening for her father was relaxation, and that he stayed busy all the time. The sub-basement level, with double garage doors that opened onto the adjacent paved rear yard, served as his workshop. He also made wine and had a wine cellar, growing grapes, and buying grapes from growers in Eastern Washington until prices became too prohibitive after World War II.

Fausto worked at the steel plant for over 40 years. In March 1961, he and 17 other employees were honored at a retirement dinner by Bethlehem Steel.

In 1966, Erma Cettolin died after an eight-month bout with pancreatic cancer. While she was ill and frequently bedridden, Fausto installed a star-shaped flower bed in the north yard, so that she could see it from their bedroom.

Fausto Cettolin died of a heart attack or stroke at home in 1969, at age 78.

Summary of the Construction History of the Property

- October 1926 – The first building permit for the house was issued. The estimated construction value listed in 1926 was \$4,000, a typical value at that time for houses of similar size, and equivalent to about \$64,000 today. Handwritten notes indicate that the foundation wall work proceeded slowly through 1927 and part of 1928, and not to the satisfaction of the permit inspector. By April 1928, two stop work orders had been placed on the site and the permit had expired.
- May 1928 – A new permit was issued to continue construction, valued at \$3,000. Work proceeded quickly, with masonry structure of all floors completed by December 1928. Handwritten notes by inspector indicate that wiring was completed by January 1929, and that interiors were lathed and plastered beginning in spring 1929.
- 1929 – The Cettolin family moves in.
- 1937 - Tax assessor photo shows exterior stucco work completed by this time, but with front porch only just underway.
- 1939 – The front porch was completed, and the year 1939 inscribed in the front steps pavement.
- 1944 – Tax assessor photo finally records front of house, which was completed in 1939.
- Mid-1940s – All interior floors, hardwood and terrazzo, finally completed.
- 1940s-1960s – Garden terraces and other features constructed.
- 1990s – Side yards sold off and developed with houses.

Overview of the Italian-American Community in Seattle

The modern Italian state is relatively young. It developed between 1848 and 1871, after a decades-long political and social movement (called the *Risorgimento*) resulted in the consolidation of several smaller states and foreign-dominated provinces into a single independent entity, the Kingdom of Italy. The current borders of Italy were largely established with the end of World War I, when a few additional regions—including Trento-Alto Adige, the mountainous area north of Fausto’s hometown of PIANZANO—would be annexed by Italy in 1918 as part of the peace settlement. At the end of World War II, the country’s borders were slightly adjusted again, and Italians voted by referendum in 1946 to change the state from a constitutional monarchy to a parliamentary republic, as it remains today.

Besides governmental instability and the socio-political struggles roiling the country during the *Risorgimento*, the last three decades of the 19th century in Italy were marked by multiple calamities and increasingly difficult living conditions. There was a collapse of agriculture due to droughts, deforestation, and overfarmed land; an entrenched land ownership system that resulted in a large class of impoverished sharecropper peasants; a very slow rate of industrialization in urban areas; and finally widespread cholera and malaria epidemics, and even devastating earthquakes. Southern Italy fared the worst, while the more industrial, literate, and cosmopolitan Northern Italy was only slightly better off. During this period, increasing numbers of Italians began to seek opportunities abroad—often a single family member would leave, to find work and send money home, with the intent to return.

In 1850, three years before Seattle was founded, only about 3,700 foreign-born Italians lived in the entire United States, which at that time had a population of over 23 million people. Before 1870, most Italians emigrating overseas went to Argentina or Brazil. In the year 1870, 2,800 Italian immigrants arrived to America, mostly from the professional class or skilled artisans from North and Central Italy. Around 1880, the numbers of Italians began to increase significantly, and the social classes of people coming to the United States changed as well. By 1900, over 100,000 Italians were immigrating per year, typically unskilled or peasant workers from southern Italy or from Sicily. Over 100,000 Italians arrived in the United States every year between 1900 and 1914, with the highest numbers occurring in 1906, 1907, 1913, and 1914, when over 260,000 immigrated per year.

Most Italian immigrants during the late 19th and early 20th centuries settled in East Coast cities. However, a study of Italian migration to Washington State during that period described the attraction of Western states: “The West offered more opportunities than the mills and tenements of eastern metropolises. Typical jobs paid better. A coal miner in Roslyn made more in two days than a garment worker in New York City made in a week.” Italians in the West were entering a society that was still evolving, whereas in the East, society had already stratified. In addition, land was cheap compared to East. Italians in the West were more likely to live in rural areas than in the East. Italians in the West found work primarily in mining and railroads; some in fisheries; but rarely in timber. In Washington State, the proportion of urban to rural Italian immigrants in the 1920 census was 3:2, whereas in New England and the Mid-Atlantic states, the ratio was 10:1. Because of this less urban emphasis, fewer “Little Italies” developed in Western states.

The first Italian in Washington Territory was probably John Nobili (1812-1856), a white Rome-born Jesuit missionary who was active from British Columbia to California, and was stationed at Fort Vancouver in 1844. Federal census records indicate that in 1860, there were 11 Italian-born men living in Washington Territory. In 1870, there were 24. Several of these were Italian Jesuits, including Father Joseph

(Giuseppe) Cataldo, who established mission schools in the area, and established Gonzaga College in Spokane in 1887.

In the period between 1890 and 1920, Italians were not a major immigrant stock in Washington—most were white Canadians, Swedes, Germans, and Norwegians. The greatest growth in Washington State’s Italian immigration took place between 1900 and 1910, coinciding with a national increase. King County’s Italian-born population grew from 797 to 5,003 between 1900 and 1910. However, the foreign born Italian population in the United States then declined between 1910 and 1920, when World War I drastically reduced immigration, and some of the older generations of immigrants died off. The largest concentration of Italian immigrants in Washington was consistently in the most populous counties—King had the highest population, then Pierce and Spokane Counties. Most were men—in 1910, census figures show that the male/female ratio for foreign-born Italians in Washington State was an astounding 544 to 100, compared to the national average of 190 to 100.

Seattle’s Italian community began to coalesce around the turn of the 20th century. Many had come to the area to work in the coal mines around Renton and Black Diamond, in construction, or to work as laborers on family farms. By 1910, there were 3,454 Italian immigrants living in Seattle (at a time when the booming city had a population of 240,000) and eighty percent were employed in blue-collar jobs. Work included “pick and shovel” crews building city infrastructure, street railroad jobs, and factory labor. Italians drove most of the garbage collection wagons until the city bought them out in 1915 and then hired them back for municipal service. Others became truck farmers in the Rainier Valley, or the Duwamish and Green River valleys; many had stalls in Pike Place Market.

Approximately half of the Italian community in the early 1900s settled in the north end of the Rainier Valley, centered on Rainier Avenue between Massachusetts and Atlantic Streets. In 1915, about 215 families lived in this area, and within a few years it was so closely associated with the local Italian community that it was informally called the “Garlic Gulch.” Institutional buildings there, such as Colman School (1910, now the Northwest African American Museum) and Our Lady of Mount Virgin Catholic Church (1915), provided a center to the community. Shops and services geared toward the newly arrived immigrants developed in the vicinity, including prominent businesses that lasted for generations, such as Merlino Foods, the Borrachini Bakery, or the Oberto Sausage Company.

In the 1940s, a highway associated with the new Lake Washington Floating Bridge was constructed through the commercial heart of the neighborhood. The highway, which later became Interstate 90, was widened in 1979 after more than a decade of controversy, displacing many of the old Italian businesses and families from the Rainier Valley. The historic heart of the local Italian community never recovered.

Despite the prominence of the Italian-American community in the Rainier Valley, other neighborhoods had notable Italian-American populations beginning in the early 1900s. These included Georgetown and South Park, which were near riverside truck farms and industries; and Youngstown, with its steel mill.

Virginia Cettolin recalls that their family had friends and relatives all over Seattle, including Erma Cettolin’s sister and brother, who had also immigrated from Italy. The brother (Virginia’s uncle) lived across the street and three doors down. The Cettolins often engaged with the local Italian-American community, but primarily with the smaller group in West Seattle. The large “Garlic Gulch” population in the Rainier Valley was far away and inconvenient for them to visit, because the Cettolins did not own a car and traveled by public transportation. Instead, they attended Holy Rosary Church, a few blocks away up the hill at 42nd Avenue SW and SW Genesee Street, in West Seattle. When shopping at the West

Seattle Junction with her mother, Virginia recalled that they would sometimes encounter their Italian-American friends, to whom her mother would speak in Italian while the children would speak in English. Virginia noted that the Italians would sometimes chastise Fausto and Erma for pronouncing their name as the Anglicized “Seh-to-lin” rather than “CHE-toe-leen” as would be proper Italian.

The Stylistic Characteristics of the House and Property

Stylistically, the Cettolin house features decorative elements that would be categorized as Italian Renaissance Revival. As summarized by the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, the style was popular from 1910-1930, and:

“...was inspired by 14th and 15th century wealthy Florentine merchant buildings in Italy. Urban palazzos, such as those constructed for the Medici family, were used as direct inspiration of the rebirth of the style during the 20th century. The word “Renaissance” means “rebirth,” and designers of the original Renaissance style had studied Greek and Roman building forms and details in order to employ a feeling that a building could display wealth, artist knowledge, and pride.... It was utilized primarily for commercial and civic buildings such as libraries, social lodges, courthouses, or banks. However examples can be found on large-scale single family residences and apartment complexes.

Usually rectangular in plan, the style features symmetrical facades, with masonry or stone exterior walls highlighted by cast stone or terra cotta detailing. Often, the formal design is distinguished by a rusticated ground level and quoining at the corners of the main facade.

Other distinguishing elements include a strong division of floors by elaborate string courses, which often define the sills of windows; rows of round topped windows made up of two lights under one arch separated by a colonette; and a deep articulated cornice. Windows of a different type are often found on each floor and are commonly highlighted by strongly marked voussiors, pilasters, spandrel panels or pediments.

Most Italian Renaissance Revival Style buildings have low pitched or flat roofs which are hidden by cornices, short parapet walls or balustrades. Small scale examples such as depots and dwellings, utilize hip roofs with wide overhanging eaves covered in clay tile, which harkens to the Mediterranean roots of the style.”

While the subject building lacks round-arched windows and wide overhanging eaves, it features most of the characteristic elements that define the style. Plaster work is used to replicate rusticated stone quoins, string courses, window framing elements, and other detailing that might otherwise be constructed of terra cotta or cast stone. However, the multi-arched entablature at the front porch is exotic or mannerist in form and not typically found in Italian Renaissance Revival buildings.

The building might also be classified as a vernacular structure, since Fausto was not known to have received architectural training, and since he built the building himself. Fausto’s daughter, Virginia, recalls that he never had a plan for the building, that the design was in his head, and that she never saw anyone else helping him with the construction work. The house in some ways resembles the kinds of late 19th century middle- and upper-class vernacular homes typically encountered throughout much of Italy. In the Cettolin family photo collection, there are two images of a prominent 19th century house in Pianzano (which still exists), which Virginia believes may have served as an inspiration to Fausto as he built their house.

Many features of the original Cettolin garden appear to have been inspired by the classically derived, Italian Renaissance garden tradition. Found throughout Italy, gardens such as Villa Lante or Isola Bella are characterized by terraces, steps, balustrades, and paths; hedges, topiary, water features, statuary, pebble mosaics, points of ornamental focus, and exuberance. While much of the Fausto's original garden is no longer intact, remaining elements evoke Italian gardens—curving steps with flared side walls, tall decorative planter columns, pebble mosaics at retaining walls, and colored aggregate paving.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Ancestry.com, www.ancestry.com. For naturalization records, census data, birth/death certificates, city directory data, military records, and other genealogical information.

Baist, G. Wm. *Baist's Real Estate Atlas of Surveys of Seattle, Wash. Complete in One Volume*. Philadelphia: Baist, 1912. (Digital version provided on www.pauldorpat.com)

Bently, Judy, "Delridge History," Southwest Seattle Historical Society, www.loghousemuseum.org/history/delridge-history.

City of Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections, Microfilm Library, permit records and drawings, and parcel data. www.seattle.gov/sdci

City of Seattle Department of Neighborhoods, www.seattle.gov/neighborhoods.

- "Cooper Elementary School," Report on Designation, City of Seattle Landmarks Preservation Board, issued August 27, 2002

City of Seattle Department of Neighborhoods, Historic Resources Survey database, www.seattle.gov/neighborhoods/programs-and-services/historic-preservation.

- West Seattle Golf Course Clubhouse, "Summary for 4470 35th AVE / Parcel ID 1324039013 / Inv # DPR101."
- Youngstown Improvement Club Hall, "Summary for 4851-4857 Delridge WAY / Parcel ID 1773100450 / Inv # WS015."

Dorpat, Paul. DorpatSherrardLomont/"Seattle Now & Then." www.pauldorpat.com.

Duwamish Tribe. "Treaty of Point Elliott." www.duwamishtribe.org/treaty-of-point-elliott.

HistoryLink, the Online Encyclopedia to Washington State History. www.historylink.org.

- Cipalla, Rita. "Garlic Gulch (Seattle)," HistoryLink essay 21393, February 1, 2022.
- Lange, Greg. "West Seattle beginnings: Humphrey Post Office (later Youngstown) opens on January 13, 1903," HistoryLink essay 577, January 1, 1999.
- Riddle, Margaret. "Donation Land Claim Act, spur to American settlement of Oregon Territory, takes effect on September 27, 1850," HistoryLink essay 9501, August 9, 2010.
- Tate, Cassandra, "Seattle Neighborhoods: West Seattle – Thumbnail History," HistoryLink essay 3428, July 8, 2001.

- Tate, Cassandra. "Seattle Neighborhoods: West Seattle Junction: Thumbnail History," HistoryLink essay 8725, August 13, 2008.
- Wilma, David, "Pigott, William (1860-1929)," HistoryLink essay 3177, April 8, 2001.
- Wilma, David. "Seattle Steel Co. begins manufacturing steel products on May 4, 1905," HistoryLink essay 3175, April 8, 2001.

Houser, Michael, "Italian Renaissance Revival," Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, <https://dahp.wa.gov/historic-preservation/historic-buildings/architectural-style-guide/italian-renaissance-revival>.

King County Assessor's Records, at Puget Sound Regional Archives, at Bellevue Community College, Bellevue, WA.

King County Parcel Viewer website. <https://gismaps.kingcounty.gov/parcelviewer2/>.

Library of Congress, "Immigration and Relocation in U.S. History - Italian," <https://www.loc.gov/classroom-materials/immigration/italian>.

Michelson, Alan, ed. PCAD (Pacific Coast Architecture Database), University of Washington, Seattle, <http://pcad.lib.washington.edu/>

Muckleshoot Indian Tribe, "Origin and Ancestors," We Are Muckleshoot, <https://www.weareuckleshoot.org/our-history>.

Nicandri, David L. *Italians in Washington State : Emigration, 1853-1924*. Tacoma: Washington State American Revolution Bicentennial Commission, 1978.

Ochsner, Jeffrey Karl, ed. *Shaping Seattle Architecture: A Historical Guide to the Architects*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2014.

R.L. Polk and Company. *Polk's Directory to the City of Seattle*. Seattle: various dates.

Sanborn, D. A. Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps. Seattle, Washington (various dates) maps accessed from Seattle Public Libraries, online. www.spl.org.

Scambray, Kenneth. *Italian Immigration in the American West: 1870-1940*. University of Nevada Press, 2021.

Schmid, Calvin, "Population of Italians and Negroes, 1920," map, 1926 (held by Seattle Public Library).

The Seattle Post-Intelligencer newspaper. Seattle, Washington (searchable database at the Seattle Public Library website, www.spl.org).

"Retired group to be honored by Bethlehem," March 9, 1961, p. 27.

"Mrs. Fausto Cettolin," obituary, August 1, 1966, p. 30.

"Cettolin, Fausto U," obituary, April 20, 1969, p. 68.

The Seattle Times newspaper. Seattle, Washington. Includes previous incarnations as *The Seattle Press Times*, *The Seattle Daily Times*, and *The Seattle Sunday Times*. Searchable database at the Seattle Public Library website, www.spl.org.

"Want \$100,000 spent on macadamized road," February 1, 1906, p. 5.

"Delridge Way street's name," May 14, 1940, p. 3.

"Mayor ask funds to buy homes on Fauntleroy Av.," July 28, 1960, p. 40.

Thrush, Coll. *Native Seattle: Histories from the Crossing-Over-Place*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007.

Vingo, Charley. *Italians of the American Northwest*. Spokane, Wash.: Ulyssian Publications, 2001.

Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP). WISAARD, the state's digital repository for architectural and archaeological resources and reports.
<https://wisaard.dahp.wa.gov>.

Interviews:

- Virginia Cettolin, October 12, 2022, by phone.

The features of the Landmark to be preserved include: the site, the exterior of the house, and the interior terrazzo floors.

Issued: April 21, 2023



Sarah Sodt
City Historic Preservation Officer

Cc: Marilyn Kennell and Alan McMurray; owners
David Peterson Historic Resource Consulting
Ian Macleod, Acting Chair, LPB
Nathan Torgelson, SDCI
Katrina Nygaard, SDCI
Christina Thomas, ITD