



TO: City of Madison Plan Commission
RE: **Conditional Use Permit** application
The French House, 633 N Frances St., Madison
DATE: February 20, 2007

The French House, Inc. is requesting a Conditional Use permit for our dining facility located within the French House at 633 North Frances St.

The French House, Inc. is a 501 (c) 3 corporation, incorporated in 1922. The corporation was founded by French professors at the UW-Madison. While it is a separate entity from the University, it has always operated as an outreach program through the Department of French and Italian. The Director is appointed by the Department; his duties are 50% administration of the French House, and 50% teaching and other academic administration.


Since its first year in operation, the French House has been open to French-speaking campus and community guests who come to the French House to speak French in an immersion environment and to sometimes share a meal with its residents.

In 1965, the French House moved to its current location at 633 N Frances St. Andrew Irving, upon assumption of his duties as Director in the fall of 1995, spoke with a sanitation officer of Madison's Environmental Health Services to be certain that the facility was working within governance of city code. He was told at that time that because the principal function of the French House was *not* selling meals, and that the income from those meals was relatively small, the French House was in fact operating in accordance with city code. Unfortunately Andrew did not keep record of this call.

However, in May of 2006, Madison's Environmental Health Services insisted that the French House obtain a food and beverage permit because the house was selling meals to the public. Despite a disagreement between the French House and Health Services about the House's true need for this permit, the French House agreed to comply and immediately took the necessary steps to obtain the permit. The kitchen and dining facility passed inspection by Health Services (with a few minor violations that were corrected). Inspections were also conducted by Building and Fire; both *signed-off* on the permit. What remains is approval from Zoning. Therefore, in an effort to comply with the necessities of the food & beverage permit, the French House requests a Conditional Use permit to continue to offer meals to its guests.

Please note that our request has the full support of our Alderperson Austin King.

On behalf of the French House, I thank you for your time and consideration.


Andrew T. Irving
Director

Please see next page for detailed information.

1. **Existing conditions and uses of property:** The French House is home to roughly 30 UW-Madison students each academic year; these students must speak French while in the house and take their meals together in our dining facility. The French House also hosts meetings for the Department of French and Italian, gatherings of the French club (including its movie club), occasional music recitals, and other get-togethers related to its mission of supporting French on campus and in the community.

An on-going activity of the French House is to open its doors to the campus and community so that native francophones and those would like to improve their French skills can share a meal with our residents in an educational immersion environment. Meals offered to the public occur only when classes are in session (15 weeks per semester, 2 semesters per year). They include weekly Wednesday dinners and Friday lunches (served buffet-style). Prices for these meals remain relatively inexpensive because our goal is *not* to make a profit. Currently Wednesday dinner is \$9.00 (\$8.00 for students) and Friday lunch is \$7.00 (\$6.00 for students); the meal includes a main course, salad, dessert & beverage (coffee, water, milk, tea).

Students enrolled in UW-Madison's French 301/302, a conversational French course, meet at the French House over the noon hour and are invited (but not required) to dine with the French House residents. The cost is a reduced \$4.00 - \$5.00 per lunch.

Please note:

All outside guests gain access to the French House through the **same lobby entrance**. The "restaurant" portion does not have its own entrance.

There is **no outside advertising**. The words "La Maison Française" are displayed very discretely to the left of the entrance door. That text is barely legible from the sidewalk or street.

The French House has **no plans to add additional services or expanded food operations** in the event that this conditional use permit be accepted.

2. **Development schedule for the project:** This "project" is currently on-going because the French House has been operating as described above at its present location since 1965. Prior to 1965, similar operations were in place yet no specific record is available (as of yet). Acting in good faith, and unaware that a good & beverage permit was necessary, the French House is now trying to comply with city code as soon as possible.
3. **Names of persons involved (business manager):**
 - a. Andrew Irving, Director, Secretary, French House committee and Board of Directors, Professor of French, Department of French and Italian, UW-Madison.
 - b. Steven Winspur, President, French House committee and Board of Directors, Professor of French, Department of French and Italian, UW-Madison.
 - c. Connie Skala, Treasurer, Skala & Associates (accounting), Madison, WI.
4. **Types of business:** The French House, Inc. is a 501 (c) 3 corporation whose primary purpose is to provide housing and meals to French-speaking UW-Madison students.
5. **Number of employees:** The French House currently employs three cooks, four kitchen staff personnel (student workers), a housekeeper, and a part-time administrative assistant.
6. **Hours of operation:** As a residence hall, the French House is open for student occupancy from roughly August 15 to May 31. Meals are only served when UW-Madison classes are in session. The dining facility is open to the public during the academic year on Wednesday evenings (6:00pm) and Friday lunches (12:15pm). The French House organizes two formal dinners each year in addition to the Wednesday dinners mentioned above.
7. **Square footage or acreage of the site:** 0.2739 acres
8. **Number of dwelling units:** 24 units (13 single, 10 double dormitory-style rooms, one studio apartment)
9. **Gross square footage of building:**
 - a. Building = 11,664 square feet
 - c. Dining room (within building) = 648 square feet

10. **Loading and Delivery:** The loading and delivery of provisions is from the rear of the building to the right of the parking lot.
11. **Number of parking stalls:** 6 (1 stall will be van accessible, i.e. 8' wide with 5' wide access aisle).
12. **Bicycle access and parking:** There are two 2' x 6' U-lock bicycle racks on the sidewalk level of the house, each with ample space to maneuver behind them.