

From: [Curtis Bush](#)
To: [Urban Design Comments](#)
Subject: agenda item Six
Date: Tuesday, April 28, 2026 4:27:50 PM

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I am in favor of the Oakwood proposal.
Curtis Bush

From: [Carol Steinhart](#)
To: [Urban Design Comments](#)
Subject: Development of Oakwood Village University Woods Campus
Date: Monday, April 27, 2026 6:41:05 PM

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I strongly oppose this project as designed. It is hyper-focused on competing in the senior housing market and on the desires of current residents rather than future residents, yet there is *great* dissatisfaction with it from current residents. Moreover, most of the current residents will still be here in the "future." And I believe that the future's real market is misunderstood in the rush to compete.

The project is unconcerned with sustainability and other environmental issues, although the majority of residents are *well informed* and *very concerned*. EUA has built a Leed gold-certified school and a senior housing development in Wisconsin, projects comparable to this one. But it builds what its customer wants, and the current plan prioritizes large, luxurious apartments above comfortable, affordable, sustainable options. Niceties like solar panels or geothermal systems are considered too expensive, although solar heat is unequivocally the least expensive heat and solar panels in the east-side campus saved thousands of dollars in their first year.

It is a travesty to eliminate so much of the open space outside of the Tabor patio. It serves many invaluable practical and quality-of-life functions. It also reduces flooding risks, which are increasing as the adverse consequences of climate change increase.

There is no mention of dedicated library space to house our large print collection. Our library is much appreciated and heavily used- Books are and will not become obsolete. We need a high-tech library that functions as a traditional library but can also be a venue for small group meetings.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Carol Steinhart

From: [Nancy Lee](#)
To: [Urban Design Comments](#)
Subject: Gundega Korsts comments
Date: Monday, April 27, 2026 11:38:26 PM

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As a resident at Oakwood Village, University Woods. I write in full support of Gundega Korsts' comments about the proposed changes to our campus. Actually, I find the proposed changes horrifying in their threats to our quality of life here. Please keep more of the open space outside The Bistro. Please keep all the walkways between the buildings. Please, please keep the Chapel.

Sincerely,

Nancy V. Lee

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Nancy Lee
New email: Nancy2018Lee@gmail.com

From: [Kato Perlman](#)
To: [Urban Design Comments](#)
Cc: gk@korsts.com
Subject: Oakwood future plans
Date: Monday, April 27, 2026 9:59:50 PM

You don't often get email from kperlman@wisc.edu. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Hello:

I am a long term Independent Resident of Oakwood Village West retired 10 years ago as Distinguished Service Emeritus Senior Scientist from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

I am 100 % **OPPOSED** to your incredibly destructive plans, to destroy one of the best retirement communities in Madison

by a “dime a dozen” commercial plan without consideration of the implication of your proposal.

Obviously knowledgeable longterm leaders from Oakwood were not included by proposing this plan.

Please do select the best longterm Oakwood leaders before trying to produce another plan by a reputable competent

organization. Oakwood Village West could be one of the best if planned with consideration of the well being of its residents.

sincerely

Kato Perlman
kperlman@wisc.edu
6205 Mineral Point Rd #810
Madison, WI 53705
608-238-3819

c

DATE: 27 April 2026

FROM: Gundega Korsts

6205 Mineral Point Rd, Apt 120

Madison WI 53705

TO: City of Madison Urban Design Commission

RE: **Opposition to Agenda item 92813**, 29 April 2026 meeting

I am in favor of adding Independent Living capacity at Oakwood Village–University Woods, but the plan as presented would accomplish this goal to the detriment of the rest of the Oakwood community. The plan should be sent back for major revisions.

It's not the architects' fault. If the importance of community wasn't stressed for them, they can't be blamed for not noticing how good design decisions in one building in a continuing care retirement community can have major negative effects on community as a whole.

Taken broadly: The plan does not meet the standard of compatibility with the existing character of this Oakwood Village area, neither aesthetically nor in principle.

My main objections: **1.** The plan fragments the Oakwood community, physically and socially, across all levels of care. **2.** The plan reduces quality of life for Assisted Living residents facing the new building. **3.** The plan drastically slices away at an outdoor space that has functioned as a village green for residents and their families. **4.** The plan tears down the existing chapel without a replacement, only “a multipurpose meeting room that will temporarily function as chapel space until a new chapel is constructed”; there is no plan for any such construction, and no mention of historic preservation (the original 1920s entrance arch was fitted into the 1989 chapel exterior).

1.a. The plan dismisses the need for connecting buildings.

One reason why Oakwood residents have such a thriving community is that all our buildings are connected internally, through skywalks or underground connections. No level of care is physically isolated from the others—not even Memory Care, despite necessary keyed entry. Events, amenities, and services are accessible to all. (The one exception is the stand-alone Recreation Center.)

Surface paths are welcome in good weather, and for more mobile residents who can handle stairs and steep slopes, but the indoor option is essential. It means more than just access to facilities. Long indoor loop walks make all the difference for mind-and-body fitness in Wisconsin winters and other long spells of bad weather.

The at-grade connection to the Village Inn seems a good idea, until you realize how it fragments the campus still further. Just as important, what specialized forethought engineering will be needed, to cope with our expected increases in extreme weather events? Dane County saw 11 inches of rain in one day, not long ago (2018).

1.b. The new building turns its back on the campus.

The back of the building, a broad wall without any gap or even entrance, looms over diminished green space. A private courtyard is entered from the outer roadway, not from campus. (Strictly speaking, it can also be entered from the northeast end of the Covenant Oaks memory care building, but that is an out-of-the-way route.)

2. Assisted Living residences need a window on nature.

The Tabor Assisted Living residences are single rooms, with large windows for light and a view of nature. The rooms now graced by gardens, trees, and sky will have a five-story wall looming over them. The greater the mobility impairment, the greater the need for assistance, the more it matters to have a window on the natural world.

Gardening, too. Some Tabor residents can step outside for raised-bed gardening, but it seems likely that half or more of the gardening capacity will be gone. Gardening is life-enhancing.

3. The reduced landscaping area cuts away at a vital communal space.

At present, the green space and horticultural features facing Tabor Oaks Assisted Living serve the whole community: a terrace for the Bistro, lawn for games, and outdoor space for concerts and parties, as well as interesting sloped paths for a more challenging stroll. (As already noted, the green space also serves for limited-mobility gardening.)

4. The chapel is torn down, but not replaced.

There is no faith requirement for living at Oakwood, but there is an institutional and historical commitment to respecting faith. The chapel is not just a once-a-week listen-and-sing bunch of chairs with an altar. It is a real worship space.

The existing chapel, completed in 1989, included historical preservation. Part of the original (1920s?) chapel entrance is incorporated into the wall, complete with the motto (in Latin): Let health and wholeness prevail” (image on last page). — I see no mention of historical preservation in this plan.

The chapel is also an intimate concert space, with excellent acoustics and a fine organ. It has become well enough known that some of Wisconsin’s finest artists bring their music here.

Above all, the chapel is a living respite space, regardless of day or hour.

The planned building offers only “a multipurpose meeting room that will temporarily function as chapel space until a new chapel is constructed.” — Why not redesign that meeting-room space exclusively as a chapel, two stories high and planned for acoustics, serving all the present purposes and more?

As far as we residents can tell, there is no current plan for a new chapel. If that construction has to wait until the Tower and Gallery are demolished, our community will be stuck in ‘interim’ status for years and years. Our ages range into over 100. Asking us to wait for years is unkind, at best. — One representative comment from a resident: “But I was going to have my funeral in this chapel!”

There are good people and good minds involved in planning this project. The overall footprint may be difficult to alter, but many of our objections can be accommodated, sometimes with cost savings as well.

Keep a skywalk to Heritage. That eliminates the need for an at-grade connection to the Village Inn, which eliminates the expense of relocating loading docks (etc.) It also eliminates the need for underground connection between parking areas. After 1:1 parking is met, many residents already rent an extra space in Heritage P1. Those in the new building who similarly want more parking can just use the existing underground entrance at Heritage, taking the elevator and skywalk back home.

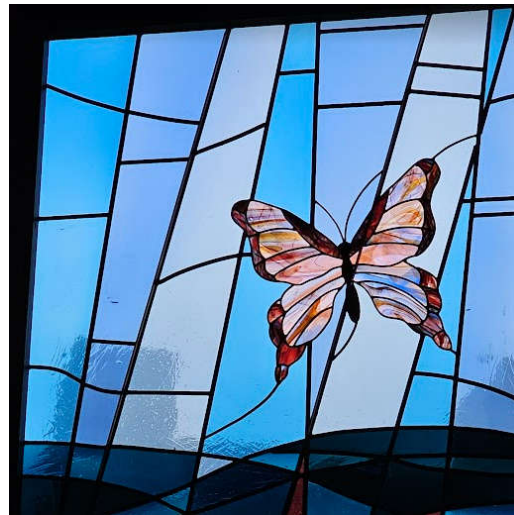
Keep the underground connections to Tabor, Covenant, and Hebron Skilled Nursing. These serve staff as well as residents, and are essential for community cohesion.

Redesign the private courtyard into a courtyard opening into what is left of the open space facing Tabor and the Bistro. This would very nearly eliminate the detriment to Assisted Living, and would certainly help preserve the character of this space as a Village Green. True, this is probably the biggest challenge, but what is an architecture firm for, if not to design for need?

With thanks for hearing me out, – G. Korsts



Attractive trees, chapel, and resident gardens back onto the **Village Green** that faces the Bistro and Assisted Living rooms.



**Oakwood Village
University Woods Chapel.**
Historical preservation.
All-faiths imagery.
Organ and grand piano:
Suited for worship as well as concerts.

