

From: [Margaret Porco](#)
To: [Madison Landmarks Commission](#)
Subject: February 9th Meeting re: Agenda Item 6 Demolition of 5534 Medical Circle
Date: Sunday, February 8, 2026 11:54:16 PM

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Dear Landmarks Commission,

Medical Circle represents one of Madison's last remaining concentrations of Marshall Erdman buildings. While not formally designated as historic, these structures embody significant architectural quality and represent an important era in Madison's mid-century development. The proposed demolition is fundamentally inconsistent with the scale, proportions, and design character that currently define this unique area. Approving this project risks losing irreplaceable examples of mid-century institutional architecture that contribute meaningfully to Madison's built heritage.

However, the impact extends well beyond the loss of a single building. The demolition and subsequent development will directly harm those businesses still operating in Erdman buildings on Medical Circle—precisely the kind of vulnerable, place-based enterprises the city has committed to protecting.

Montessori Children's House (MCH) has served Madison families for 60 years, including 35 years at their current Medical Circle location. As a small nonprofit providing quality Montessori education for children ages 18 months to 6 years, MCH is directly adjacent to the proposed demolition site. The destruction of the neighboring building will compromise both their daily operations and the functional integrity of their own Erdman building.

This is not merely about aesthetic preference—it's about how demolition fundamentally alters the contextual relationships that made these buildings work. The Erdman buildings on Medical Circle were designed as an ensemble, with intentional relationships between structures. When one building is demolished and replaced with a structure of different scale and mass, the remaining historic buildings can no longer function as designed.

One concrete example: MCH's building includes two classrooms whose only windows face the Erdman building proposed for demolition. Replacing that structure with a taller development will eliminate substantial natural light to these classrooms. This loss affects not only the educational environment for young children but also the physical condition of the building itself—increasing moisture problems, maintenance costs, and threatening the structure's long-term viability. In essence, approving this demolition may set in motion the eventual loss of additional Erdman buildings that can no longer thrive in the altered context.

I appreciate that the city has articulated commitments both to preserving neighborhood character and to protecting local small businesses. This case presents a direct test of those commitments. I urge the Landmarks Commission to consider how this demolition will undermine both Madison's architectural heritage and the viability of an established community institution that has served families for six decades.

Thank you for your time and care for our community,

Margaret Porco,
President of the Board,
Montessori Children's House

From: [Jim Lottridge](#)
To: [Madison Landmarks Commission](#)
Cc: [Montessori Childrens House](#)
Subject: Comments for items # 91456 & # 91459
Date: Sunday, February 8, 2026 2:05:57 PM

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Comments regarding # 91456 & #91459: demolition of 5534 Medical Circle and 5555 Odana Road: Opposition to both

Commenters: Jim Lottridge & Laura Kvalheim, Directors of Montessori Children's House, 5530 Medical Circle, Madison WI

We are writing to express opposition to the demolition of 5555 Odana Road because the proposed apartment building will not be on the footprint of the current Supreme Health Club (like the apartment building to its west) but be closer to Medical Circle, changing the look and feel of our property and Medical Circle drastically.

We are also writing to express opposition to the demolition of 5534 Medical Circle because it will distract from the remaining beautiful Erdman buildings, which were built into the hill/landscape. This proposed development will tower over our building, 5530 Medical Circle, with a totally different architectural philosophy. Additionally, for our school, it will change the feeling of safety and security we've had since moving to Medical Circle in 1990's

Our non-profit school, in business since 1964, and located at 5530 Medical Circle since 1991, serves families with children ages 18 months through 6 years during the school year and 18 months through 10 years old during the summer. We own our building and have done our part to maintain it and keep it as original as possible. We love the Erdman aesthetic. It suits Montessori well! One of the key components of Montessori philosophy is the environment. Our building's airy lobby/gathering area, wood panelled, warm classrooms and large sunlit spaces, lend themselves to a "children's house." It's a warm, comfortable space for children, staff, and families - not an institutional feel. Our playground, which is behind our building, adjacent to Supreme Health Club, is large, loved by the children and used three hours per day, for much of the year. When children look up they see the clouds or migrating birds (we are on a flyway). Obviously, the proposed demolition and proposed construction will have a significant impact on our ability to use this space. And as most people know, outdoor play is a critical part of early childhood education.

Even though we have an excellent reputation, being the only American Montessori Society verified school in the area and our extraordinarily long tenured staff (more than 160 years at

our school), **prospective families typically choose us based upon how they felt when they toured. This starts when they drive down Medical Circle towards our school. Does the area look safe and secure?** To that end, MPA and other neighbors on Medical Circle have been wonderful. The dentist building to our east was remodelled a few years ago and they matched the aesthetic of the Erdman buildings. We've felt safe and secure in this location and the traffic has been reasonable. The proposed demolition of current buildings and proposed development of apartments will lead to significantly more traffic near us - near the children. Who knows what the commercial bottom floor will house - Kwik Trip? Increased traffic and people, plus balconies looking out over our playground will be concerning. This doesn't exude a safe feeling for families. In our 30 plus years of experience (20 plus in leadership of the school) no amount of trees, fencing and privacy screening will convince current and prospective families that our school is safe and private.

Again, we love our Erdman building and the architecture of the area and considered 5530 Medical Circle our forever home. If this demolition goes forward and the proposed apartments are built, the situation will likely become untenable for us and we will be **forced out**. And then, likely this last cluster of early Erdman buildings will be torn down.

Thank you for your time!
Jim Lottridge & Laura Kvalheim

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