

**From:** [Jim Lottridge](#)  
**To:** [Madison Landmarks Commission](#)  
**Cc:** [Montessori Childrens House](#)  
**Subject:** Comments for items # 91456 & # 91459  
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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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**Montessori Children's House**  
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