

From: [Jim Lottridge](#)
To: [Plan Commission Comments](#)
Cc: [Montessori Childrens House](#)
Subject: #91512 (5534 Medical Circle & 5555 Odana Road)
Date: Tuesday, March 10, 2026 10:23:07 AM

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

Dear Plan Commission,

We are writing to express opposition to the demolition and redevelopment as proposed, of 5555 Odana Road & 5534 Medical Circle because of the potential impacts for our school during the construction process and beyond. We are writing in service to the children and families that are currently at our school and for all future families. We understand that there is a need for more housing in Madison, but this shouldn't come at the expense of children's safety and security.

Our non-profit school, 501(c)(3) has been in business since 1964, and located at 5530 Medical Circle since 1991, serving families with children ages 18 months through 6 years during the school year and 18 months through 10 years old during the summer. We are state licensed, City of Madison Accredited (one of the first programs to be accredited in the 1970s), and are a verified American Montessori Society school. We own our building and have done our part to maintain it and keep it as original as possible. We are located within the cluster of four Marshall Erdman designed buildings on Medical Circle. 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 spacious playground, tucked in 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, their eyes rest on 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. Throughout this process, it has seemed as if we have been invisible! **On behalf of today's and tomorrow's children, we urge the commission to require the developers to adjust their plans and build the proposed apartment building (5555 Odana Road - building A) on the footprint of the current building, aligning with the apartment building to their west. We also urge the commission to require changes to the plans to limit/eliminate sight lines from the apartment**

building to our playground. This could be done be with a redesign, removing balconies from south wall of building A and replacing with corridors and stairwells.

We are also writing to express opposition to the demolition of 5534 Medical Circle because it will detract 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 the 1990's. 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. 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 with this proposed development. **We wonder if this project would be approved next to a public school. If the demolition and development of 5534 Medical Circle goes forward, we urge the commission to require changes to the plan that limit the size/look/feel of the project to better align with the existing buildings on Medical Circle. Additionally, we urge the commission to eliminate any sight lines toward our property and specifically our playground.**

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, as designed, 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. **Again, we urge the commission to consider the impacts of this proposed development on the children in our care now and for children in the future.**

If you are not familiar with the rea we would encourage you to drive slowly down Medical Circle and see for yourself. You are welcome to pull into our parking lot and have a closer look.

Thank you for your time and consideration!
Jim Lottridge & Laura Kvalheim

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Montessori Children's House

Madison, Wisconsin
Serving children since 1964!
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608.273.8600
608.441.9686 (fax)
MadisonMontessori.org



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Cc: [Montessori Childrens House](#)
Subject: #91512 (5534 Medical Circle & 5555 Odana Road)
Date: Tuesday, March 10, 2026 10:30:24 AM
Attachments: [Aerial View Medical Circle and Odana Road.pdf](#)

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

Dear Plan Commission,

We are the directors of Montessori Children's House (MCH). Our non-profit school, 501(c)(3) has been in business since 1964, and located at 5530 Medical Circle since 1991. We serve families with children ages 18 months through 6 years during the school year and 18 months through 10 years old during the summer. MCH is state licensed, City of Madison Accredited (one of the first programs to be accredited in the 1970s), and a verified American Montessori Society school. **Our school is located next door to the proposed development at 5534 Medical Circle & 5555 Odana Road.**

We recently viewed the UDC recording from September 17, 2025 - the information presentation by Bear Development. **After watching the recording it became clear to us that UDC was not made aware that we are next door to the proposed development and would be surrounded by it. The developers referred to other neighbors on Medical Circle (us) as "commercial users."** During the presentation, concerns with the pool were mentioned several times, but at no point did anyone wonder about the implications for the preschool next door. Additionally, a photo that was included in their presentation (at 4:15:29) labelled "existing building from Medical Circle east" did not accurately show the view to the east from 5534 Medical Circle, instead it showed the west side of that building. If it had shown an accurate view looking east, UDC would have seen that our preschool and playground are directly next door to the proposed development. We've included some photos to show the view looking east and north towards Odana Road.

Our playground is directly south of the building A development at 5555 Odana Road. The existing structure (Supreme Health Club) is currently about 200 feet away from our playground. The proposed development would move building A about 100 feet closer with balconies looking down over our playground. Obviously, we have security/safety and privacy concerns with this as we use our playground year around, up to 3 hours per day and as most people know, outdoor play is an important part of early childhood education. Outdoor play is also a required part of the day for state licensed childcare centers.

We've attached the aerial overview from the presentation with our school and

playground labelled. **And we'd encourage you to see for yourself with a drive down Medical Circle.** You are welcome to pull into our parking lot and have a closer look.

Thanks for your time!
Jim Lottridge & Laura Kvalheim

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Montessori Children's House

Madison, Wisconsin

Serving children since 1964!

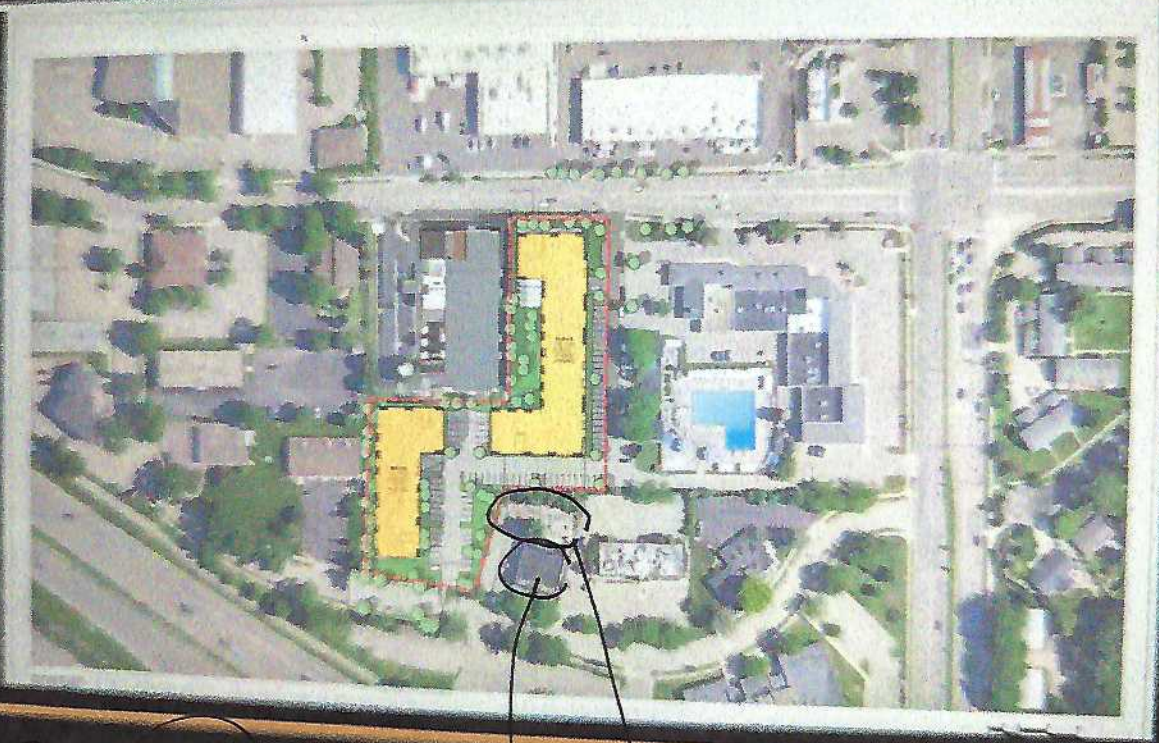
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4:16:29 / 4:52:48

Play (Speech)

1x

Urban Design Commission: Meeting of 9/17/19

MCH
Playground

Montessori
Children's
House (MCH)

Serving
18 months - 6 years - school year
18 months - 10 years - summer



From: [Jim Lottridge](#)
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Subject: #91512
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Please see the attachment with another option that includes a 25-30 foot wide buffer with dense evergreen trees along Montessori Children's House property line (5530 Medical Circle).

Thank you,
Jim & Laura

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Madison, Wisconsin
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