

Government Inspector of Planning

Re: ERUV

Notes of speech given by Mr Jerry Shatzkes on 1 December 1993.

Summary Notes

1) First hand experience of growing up in New York City with an Eruv, and how it enhanced the quality of life of young people as well as the elderly.

2) As the Founding President of an independant orthodox community known as Ner Yisrael, which has approximately five hundred men, women and children, I am obliged to voice the demands made to me to demonstrate the needs and requirements for the Eruv.

1) I was born and grew up in the States, and lived in New York City for the first 25 years of my life. From first-hand knowledge of Queens, which is one of the five boroughs of New York, and quite similar to the borough of Barnet, one neighbourhood within the borough is Kew Garden Hills. It is in fact in many respects not unlike Hendon, Golders Green and Hampstead Garden Suburb. It is an ethnically and racially mixed neighbourhood - Kew Garden Hills is made up of private homes, apartment buildings coupled with low income developments.

The Jewish population of Kew Garden Hills in the 1960s and early 1970s was between 35-40%, of which approximately 25% were orthodox. The Eruv was constructed over twenty two years ago, and it immediately had a positive effect on the orthodox community. It allowed families with young children to take their pushchairs and prams out to synagogues, as well as to visit friends, which enhanced the quality of family life, as it allowed family members within the community to get together, even if there were young children or elderly confined to wheelchairs etc. According to Rabbi Fabian Schunfeld, leading Rabbi for the last 35 years in the area, and the head of the Eruv committee who is still responsible for its upkeep and maintenance, there has been no vandalism, social unrest or antisemitic incidents attributed in any way to the Eruv.

New York alone has over 30 Eruvs: Forest Hills, Hillcrest, Rego Park, Lawrence, Cedarhurst, Riverdale, etc., roughly similar in socio-economic terms to Hendon, Golders Green, Hampstead Garden Suburb, Mill Hill, Edgware, Stanmore, Borehamwood, etc.

2) I am the Founding President of an independent orthodox community, Ner Yisrael in Hendon which is under the authority of the Chief Rabbi and the United Synagogue Beth Din. Ner Yisrael consists of about 500 men, women and children, and we are not 90% or 95% in favour of the Eruv, but 100% in favour. As a young community, this Eruv would dramatically enhance the quality of congregants's lives. Our community is not unique; we mirror the views of thousands of individuals who will directly benefit from the Eruv. *Eruv would unite not divide*

3) The Talmudical tractate 'Ethics of the Fathers' compiled nearly 1600 years ago states: "Who is the wise man, he who learns from everybody". The positive American experience with regard to Eruv should be a precedent for the establishment of our Barnet Eruv.

I hope you will endorse the proposal for the establishment of the Eruv.

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