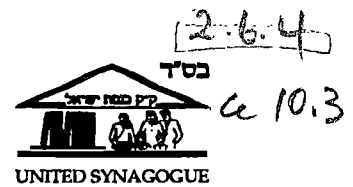


THE UNITED SYNAGOGUE
ERUV COMMITTEE



*Personalised to each member of
Barnet Town Planning & Research Committee*

19th. February, 1993

Dear Councillor,

The officer's report on the Eruv application sets out their positive planning recommendation and lists the non-planning objections that have been raised.

Clearly the TP&R meeting on Wednesday can only consider planning issues. We enclose a letter on the subject from Sir John Boynton, past President of the Royal Town Planning Institute and an acknowledged expert in the field.

Experience all over the world confirms that Eruvs pose no threat to non-users and are certainly not divisive.

The sad reality here is that a few people, some of whom are obviously embarrassed by their unique Jewish heritage, have frightened local residents with misinformation that has lead down a familiar path to fear and racial intolerance. We believe that this has gone too far and threatens to stain this Borough's proud record of community relations.

We enclose letters from the Chief Rabbi of Great Britain and from the Director of the Sternberg Centre for Judaism (Reform), for your interest.

We appeal to all councillors to unite in support of this proposal - not just on planning grounds but also out of respect for the traditions, beliefs and specific needs of at least 10,000 Jewish residents and the community as a whole.

Yours Sincerely,

David Schweitzer

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TEL 071-433 3434 FAX 071-433 3934

Committee

Laurence Begner, Brian Berenblut, Edward Black, Joe Bloomberg, David Cohen, Daniel Drukarz, Jeremy HersHKorn, Michael Goldblatt, Michael Posen, David Schreiber, Syma Weinberg

Rabbinic Panel

Rabbi Isaac Bernstein (Finchley), Dayan Ivan Einstock (Golders Green), Rabbi Edward Jackson (Hampstead Garden Suburb), Rabbi Alan Kimche (Ner Yisrael), Rabbi Sidney Silberberg (Hendon)

Supervisory Authority

Chief Rabbi Dr. Jonathan Sacks and the London Beth Din

Technical Officer

Alan Perrin B.Sc.



The Sternberg Centre for Judaism

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2.6.46
10.3
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המרכז ליהדות
במאנור האוס

Director · Rabbi A M Bayfield MA

The Councillors of the London Borough of Barnet,
The Town Hall
Hendon
LONDON NW4 4BG

Dear Councillor,

In June of last year I wrote to Cllr. Mrs. Barbara Langstone in support of the eruv. I have followed the debate and discussion on the subject with considerable interest and have not changed the views which I expressed in that letter. Now that the moment of decision is drawing close, I hope that you will find it helpful if I repeat the substance of my views.

As a Reform Jew, I am not directly affected by the issue, since we have liberalised our practice sufficiently to avoid the particular difficulties which the eruv addresses. Nevertheless, I believe it important that I add my voice in support of the majority community.

I am well aware that there are many Orthodox Jews in north west London who are profoundly affected by the absence of an eruv. From my perception, many people - particularly young women with babies - can become virtual prisoners in their own homes over the long summer Saturdays. Whilst not sharing their commitment to the particular understanding of God's will which leads to this restriction, I both understand it and respect it. An eruv will ease a significant number of problems and not only allow people to enjoy the Sabbath more fully but engage in the kind of beneficial social interaction which arises when parents can take their young children to visit elderly relatives and so forth.

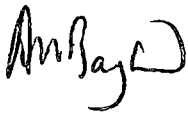
I have listened carefully to the arguments of those who have reservations about the eruv. I have to say that I do not believe its construction will cause an unacceptable level of disturbance or inconvenience to our neighbours. I am deeply sceptical of the suggestion that the existence of an eruv will lead to the creation of all those negative features subsumed under the term 'ghetto'. What I know of the American experience supports the contention that the fears are groundless.

Finally and most importantly, I would like to add this. I have learned over the years that God speaks to different people in different and often surprising ways. My admiration is always for those who respond and, amongst those, it is my belief, are the devoutly religious Jews of north west London. I respond to God's

promptings in a slightly different fashion but that in no way diminishes my conviction that those who need an eruv should be allowed to have an eruv.

May I conclude by urging your support for the proposal and underlining the fact that I have signed this letter not only in my personal capacity but as the Director of the Sternberg Centre for Judaism and on behalf of a significant percentage of the Reform Jewish community in the Borough.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Am Bayfield' with a stylized flourish at the end.

RABBI A.M. BAYFIELD

2.6.4 ←
10.3

Sir John Boynton M.C.
Solicitor

1-B Oakhill Avenue
London NW3 7RD
Telephone: 071-435 0012.

17 February 1993

Dear Councillor

Proposed Eruv - Hendon, Golders Green & Hampstead Garden Suburb

The United Synagogue have asked me to take an interest in their planning application for an Eruv in NW4 and NW11 postal districts. They have been in touch with me because of my town planning experience over many years both in local government and the private sector.

The main concern of the applicants appears to be that the violent terms in which some views against the proposal have been expressed, may prevent the application being considered on its planning merits. For example, to describe the proposal as resulting in being forced to "walk in and out of gates of a ghetto every day" does not seem to me to further the reaching of a rational decision.

However, as experienced members of the Planning Committee you will be aware of the danger to which I draw attention.

After reading the papers sent to me I visited the Eruv in Woodlands Close. Whilst I do not think that it is typical of what is proposed in the present planning application, I found the post and wire unobtrusive - indeed, I had difficulty in finding them.

Many novel proposals cause great controversy when they are first mooted. My experience has been that later, when actually completed and in use, the public wonder what all the earlier fuss was about.

I notice that something is made by objectors of the danger of the precedent which could be created if the application were approved. I see no evidence in the papers sent to me to support this fear, which is so often put forward when a new and untried proposal is made.

I hope that these few comments may be of some value to you in reaching a decision which can be justified on town planning, environmental and highway grounds alone.

Yours sincerely,

To Members of the Barnet
Planning Committee

J K Boynton

JKB000L/49

The Planning Department
7th Floor, Barnet House
1255 High Road
London N20 0EJ

2.6.4

12 February 1993

Dear Sirs:

Re: Eruv Planning Application

Each signatory to this letter is a survivor of one or more of Nazi Germany's ghettos and concentration camps where we were subjected daily to the most inhuman treatment.

In the context of the application for planning permission for the establishment of the North West London Eruv, we have seen reports of opposition by one or two survivors of the Nazi Holocaust. In a TV interview, one survivor likened the Eruv to a ghetto and the TV presenter stated that to some people the Eruv had "disturbing echoes of Hitler's concentration camps." In our view, this comparison is completely misguided.

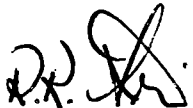
We suspect that the survivors who have previously expressed opposition to the Eruv, though no fault of their own, do not properly understand what an Eruv is. Of course we acknowledge the memories of those survivors. However, as you know from your examination of the plans, the Eruv only involves several short stretches of monofilament line. Since this line is no more similar to a barbed wire enclosure than telegraph wire is, we cannot remotely relate their view of the Eruv to the plans before you.

It is important for you to understand that there is no comparison between an Eruv and a ghetto or concentration camp. The very suggestion of a comparison is deeply insulting.

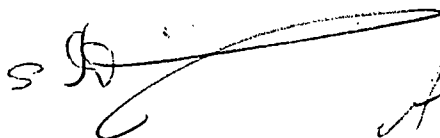
As each of the undersigned knows only too well, the Nazi camps and ghettos were maintained by Hitler and his henchmen to confine people against their will with a view to oppression and ultimate extermination. In our view, an Eruv is an expression of freedom and integration within the wider community. This is what we so desperately aspired to throughout the dark days of our persecution and for which those few of us who survived are profoundly grateful.

We hope that you will recommend to the Planning Committee that planning permission is granted.

Yours truly



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London NW4 3DT



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