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Mr. Geoff Brown,
Chief Planner,
Development Control,
London Borough of Barnet,
1255 High Road,
LONDON N20 0EJ

25th September 1996

Dear Mr. Brown,

I am writing to complain at the letter from Elizabeth Lawrence written on behalf of the Barnet Eruv Objector's Group, dated 18th September 1996 and distributed in our area. My objections are as follows:-

Firstly, the letter raises issues which have been well rehearsed in the past and found to be fallacious. In particular, the questioning of the right to erect a "Sectarian Border" across Barnet ... in many cases using residents' properties as part of the boundary without their consent", is almost laughable. There must be many properties that form borders and boundaries of postal codes, parishes, towns etc. where no-one is asked whether they wish their property to be so used and there can be no possible harm caused in the case proposed.

Secondly, the clear implication that the Eruv is likely to create a risk to children, the disabled, the visually impaired and the elderly is scaremongering of a particularly insidious nature. The Objectors Group are well aware that there are Eruvim (Eruvs) in many towns and cities throughout the world and if they believe this objection has any validity let them provide a single instance where such hazards have become factual.

My overriding concern is that the objections raised are clearly not based on logical grounds but on anti religious grounds. It would be interesting to know whether the "vast majority of people" who do not want the Eruv also object to the infinitely greater number of lampposts, telegraph poles, advertising boards and other items that are constantly erected in our streets.

My family and I will benefit from the Eruv as will thousands of other practising Jews in our area. (Another well publicised complaint is that the beneficiaries will be few - that is simply not true.) My young grandchildren will be able to be wheeled to my home and elderly and sick relatives can be given fresh air on the Sabbath. The Eruv will benefit a large number of your constituents and it is a source of considerable puzzlement to me and many of my co-religionists as to why a vociferous minority of people feel able to claim that these minor and almost invisible changes to the landscape will be harmful and as to how they can possibly claim to speak "for the vast majority of people". The vast majority of people are fair-minded and sensible and would readily recognise that the Eruv will not prove detrimental to anyone's interests but will be very beneficial to many others.

Yours sincerely,

PETER SHELDON