

**THE UNITED SYNAGOGUE
ERUV COMMITTEE**



I N F O R M A T I O N

P A C K

J U N E 1 9 9 8

United Synagogue Eruv Committee Information Pack, June 1998

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Introduction

1. Eruv Briefing.

Eruv Briefing is an attempt to answer, in as brief a format as practicable, the most common questions concerning Eruvs in general and the Barnet Eruv application in particular.

2. *New Yorker* article by Calvin Trillin (December 12, 1994).

The *New Yorker* is one of the world's most respected magazines. This article was written by Calvin Trillin, one of *New Yorker's* leading correspondents. It is entitled "Drawing the Line: in London the battle that erupted over a request from the Orthodox raised questions about the place of Jews in English society, and what kind of society it is."

This nine page article is the most in-depth treatment to appear in the press to date. As such, it provides the best general introduction to the subject of the North West London Eruv application written by a non-participant. Its inclusion in this information pack does not mean that the Applicant endorses any or all of the sentiments expressed in the article, it is provided for councillors' information.

3. Letter from Rabbi Tony Bayfield to Barnet councillors (February 1993).

Rabbi Tony Bayfield, was in February 1993, and remains, Director of the Sternberg Centre for Judaism. He is now also Chief Executive of the Reform Synagogues of Great Britain. In the final paragraph of the letter, Rabbi Bayfield states that he writes not only in his personal capacity, but also "on behalf of a significant percentage of the Reform Jewish community in the Borough".

4. *Times* leader (February 25, 1993).

This leader appeared in *The Times* the day after the refusal of the original planning application in February 1993.

5. Letter to the Editor of the *Ham & High* by Edward Black published in July 1997.

This letter was written by Edward Black, a member of the Eruv Committee, with a view to dispelling a number of misunderstandings of what an Eruv is - and what it is not. It was prepared the day after the July 7 BBC Omnibus programme on Hampstead Garden Suburb in response to issues raised in the programme and in press publicity prior to the broadcast.

6. Letter written in December 1993 to the Department of the Environment Inspector hearing the planning appeal by Eric Fibbins.

This was written by Eric Fibbins who was a planning consultant acting on behalf of the United Synagogue Eruv Committee. At the time of writing the letter he was undergoing

treatment for cancer in the Princess Grace Hospital, hence the dateline. Tragically, Mr. Fibbins died very shortly afterwards.

7. Presidential greetings sent by United States President George Bush to Keshet Israel Congregation in Washington on the inauguration of the Washington D.C. Eruv (1990) and map of Washington D.C. Eruv.

The presidential greetings of President Bush is an example of the positive response of one secular authority to the establishment of an Eruv. The Washington Eruv area, as can be seen from the map, includes the Capitol, the White House, the Supreme Court and many other federal buildings. Eight years on it continues to enhance the Sabbath observance of those Washington residents who utilise it with no detriment to others.

8. Letter from Tom Bradley, then Mayor of Los Angeles, to the Barnet Mayor and Town Planning Committee (December 1992).

Mayor Bradley's letter is included as its middle paragraph is of some significance. In that paragraph Mayor Bradley states that the establishment of the Los Angeles Eruv was "not without controversy". However:

"[T]he ultimate result was most gratifying. The fears expressed by those who were initially opposed to the Eruv never materialised."

9. Text of petition supporting the establishment of an Eruv presented to Barnet Council in January 1993 and copy of Stoy Hayward verification.

In February 1993 a petition bearing 3,443 signatures was presented to the councillors in support of the planning application. The petition read:

"We, the undersigned, each eligible to vote in Barnet, support the establishment of the Eruv in NW London."

As a result of some questions raised by one councillor as to the veracity of certain signatures, the United Synagogue Eruv Committee commissioned Stoy Hayward, chartered accountants, to independently verify the signatures. Stoy Hayward's verification showed that 3,299 signatories were validated Barnet residents. A total of 144 were rejected, 53 as non-Barnet residents and 91 as illegible, duplicates, etc.

10. Letter from three concentration camp survivors (12 February, 1993).

Certain issues have been raised from time to time as to the effect of an eruv on holocaust survivors. This letter addresses such issues and in particular an allegation in one TV interview (by an individual who was not a holocaust survivor) that the Eruv had "disturbing echoes of Hitler's concentration camps." The writers of this letter characterise such a comparison as "completely misguided."

11. Partial timetable of events to date.

Councillors may find a partial timetable of events to date in the progress of the Eruv application to be of assistance.

12. The locations for which permission is sought

This summary points out the seven locations for which consent is sought and identifies the open issues. It is derived from the covering letter which was submitted with the present application

13. The Eruv on one page.

Finally, a summary of the issues on one side of a single sheet -- and not in microscopic type.

What Is An Eruv?

An Eruv is a notional boundary, required by orthodox Jewish law, which defines an area within which pushing wheelchairs and prams and carrying personal items like keys and prayerbooks is permitted on the Sabbath.

For observant Jews the Sabbath is a day set apart from the working week. Family time and spiritual pursuits are encouraged whilst other activities, such as shopping or doing business, are prohibited.

Jewish law permits carrying within the home or within an area defined by an Eruv. The provision of an Eruv is a positive precept and not a "relaxation" of orthodox law.

An Eruv comprises natural features such as rivers, or existing construction, such as fenced roads, and needs only to be marked with "gateways" where large gaps, such as main roads, run through it.

The planning application is for the construction of slimline posts that with connecting nylon line form "gateways" to complete the Eruv.

What Benefits Will The Eruv Bring?

The Eruv will enable thousands of observant Jews in the North West London community to enjoy their Sabbath to the full. In practice, mothers will be able to take their babies and toddlers out in prams and pushchairs and need no longer be tied to the home. Invalids and infirm people will be able to use wheelchairs to go to synagogue and visit family and friends.

Although an Eruv will greatly enhance the quality of life for all observant Jews, it will have no adverse effect on other Jewish or Gentile people.

How Many People Will Benefit?

Our estimate is about 10,000. A significant proportion of the 4,700 households holding membership in the Golders Green, Hendon, Finchley and Hampstead Garden Suburb United Synagogues is Sabbath observant. A number of independent orthodox synagogues also support the Eruv proposal.

At the time of the 1991 planning application, for example, 3,299 Barnet residents signed a petition in support of the Eruv. 2,840 were adult residents within the area of the Eruv.

Are There Eruvs Anywhere Else?

There are more than 150 Eruvs in cities around the world and of course every Israeli town has one. There are Eruvs in Australia, Belgium, France and Gibraltar. Toronto has had an Eruv for over sixty years. Virtually every major city in the United States has one, including Boston, Washington DC, Detroit, Miami, Pittsburgh, Baltimore, Memphis, Los Angeles and a large number in the New York Metropolitan area. The Washington DC Eruv area includes the White House, the Supreme Court and the Senate. The Strasbourg Eruv also includes the European Court of Human Rights and the European Parliament.

Mayor Tom Bradley of Los Angeles and Mayor Barry Neave of Melbourne, based on the positive experience of the Eruvs in their cities, wrote to Barnet Council at the time of the previous planning application encouraging them to approve the Eruv. Mayor Bradley emphasised Los Angeles's trouble-free experience with its Eruv, writing "*The fears expressed by those*

Eruv Briefing

who were initially opposed to the Eruv never materialised".

Why Hasn't There Been An Eruv In England Before?

Although Eruvs have a continuous history of 3,000 years since their introduction by King Solomon in Bible times, socio-economic changes in the last forty years have led to a dramatic increase in the number of Eruvs in the Diaspora.

The increasingly pluralistic character of our cities has encouraged Jewish people to expand community facilities, such as schools and kosher restaurants. There is a high proportion of working mothers for whom the respite of the Sabbath and the opportunity to enjoy family interaction is particularly important. They are well informed about Sabbath observance and the availability of Eruvs elsewhere.

Disabled, handicapped and elderly people are better cared for than in earlier days. In the community at large it is only over recent years that ramps for the disabled have become mandatory and provisions for the blind are being introduced. The professionals and caring organisations are generally demanding and providing better facilities and it is in this context that JEWISH CARE, the major Jewish welfare organisation with over 1,000 elderly and disabled people under care in the area, backs the demand for an Eruv. The Director of Social Services, Alex Sklan, says *"The absence of an Eruv is an unnecessary restriction on people disadvantaged by the infirmity of old age and physical disability"*.

Who Decided to Build An Eruv?

The United Synagogue Eruv Committee was formed in 1990 in

response to popular demand from within the communities of Golders Green, Hendon, Finchley and Hampstead Garden Suburb. The Committee consists of the rabbis and lay representatives of the four United Synagogues within the proposed Eruv and a number of independent orthodox synagogues within the area. The supervisory authority with respect to matters of Jewish law is the Chief Rabbi, Dr Jonathan Sacks and the Court of the Chief Rabbi headed by Dayan (Rabbinical Judge) Chanoch Ehrentreu.

What Area Does The Eruv Cover?

The Eruv includes all of the NW4 and NW11, and parts of the adjoining postal districts. There is a large Jewish community in the area which is served by the United Synagogues in Golders Green, Hendon, Finchley and Hampstead Garden Suburb and by extensive communal facilities.

What Exactly is Proposed?

The 11 mile perimeter of the proposed Eruv has been carefully planned to make use of existing structures. Approximately 10.4 miles consists of boundaries such as the M1 and the Northern Line. In order for an Eruv to be valid in Jewish law, the boundary must be continuous. There are gaps in the proposed Eruv at thirty-eight locations. What is proposed is to span those gaps with a single strand of 0.3 mm nylon fishing line which is invisible from street level. There will be eighty-eight posts and a total length of 1004 metres (about 1090) yards of line. The posts and line which will be used have no intrinsic religious significance and there is no ceremony associated with their construction.

The use of existing boundaries has enabled the proposed Eruv to cover a large area with a minimal addition to the existing street furniture. If the current proposal were modified to cover a smaller area, it may not be possible to make such extensive use of natural boundaries.

The area of the proposed Eruv is about 6.5 square miles. Within the area there are tens of thousands of telegraph poles, lamp posts and street signs. The proposed Eruv posts, taken in context, will be an insignificant addition to this street furniture.

What About The Impact Of The Eruv On Conservation Areas?

This argument was carefully considered by the Barnet Planning Officers in 1993. In recommending to the Planning Committee that the Eruv Committee's planning application be approved, they stated that:-

"In 1992 the House of Lords, when giving judgement in South Lakeland District Council v Secretary of State for the Environment, clarified that the requirements of Section 72 could be met not only by a positive contribution to preservation, but also by development which left the character or appearance of the area unharmed".

The Eruv posts will be typical of existing street furniture commonly found throughout the conservation Area and will cause no change to the character of the area. The most sensitive site is at Wildwood Road but even here the proposed posts will form part of a street scene which already includes street lamps, telegraph poles, telegraph wires and Corporation of London signs. The Eruv posts would not be conspicuous against a background of mature trees and the line will be invisible from street level.

What Were The Conclusions Of The 1993 Planning Enquiry?

The Inspector recommended approval of the Eruv application after a two week Public Inquiry. The Secretary of State for the Environment endorsed the Inspector's recommendation and granted planning permission.

The Secretary of State agreed with the Inspector that, while the proposed poles would add to the street furniture, there was no location where the overall impact would seriously harm the character and appearance of that particular location, that the proposed poles would not have any adverse visual impact on the environment and that there would be no adverse impact on amenities.

The Secretary of State further agreed with the Inspector that the erection of the poles would leave the Hampstead Garden Suburb Conservation Area substantially unharmed and that the evidence that was advanced against the erection of the poles was insufficient to justify refusal of the proposals.

Isn't The Eruv Socially Divisive?

The Eruv is a practical example of the health of a democracy. It shows that the needs of a particular ethnic community can be accommodated by society as a whole. The development of a multi-ethnic community in the UK is a process which has been under way for many years and the Eruv is a useful example of the majority permitting a minority group to carry out a project which benefits the minority without detriment to the majority. There has been no experience of divisiveness in the many cities world-wide where Eruvs have been established.

Eruv Briefing

Isn't An Eruv A Kind of Ghetto?

No. An Eruv marks a boundary for the purposes of the laws of carrying on the Sabbath and for no other purpose. A leader in The Times in February 1993 put this very well in stating "the limits of an Eruv are of immense significance to those that believe in its mystical meaning, but should be of practically no significance to those who do not". As The Times concluded, "*[Eruvs] could be a positive additional to the nation's religious geography and help define the proper boundaries of pluralism*".

A ghetto was a place of enforced Jewish settlement at a time when Jews were forbidden to live in mixed neighbourhoods. An Eruv bears no relation to this concept. On the contrary, an Eruv is a public symbol of tolerance and mutual respect. It indicates a community integrated within an understanding and tolerant host society, free to practise and uphold its own traditional values.

Won't The Establishment Of An Eruv Lead To Anti-Semitism?

Barnet is an area with a flourishing Jewish community with synagogues, schools, kosher food shops and other amenities. Precisely because Eruvs are neither a religious symbol nor a particularly obvious landmark, they have never attracted anti-semitic attacks.

For this reason the Board of Deputies of British Jews, the national organisation which monitors anti-semitism across the country, does not believe that the proposed Eruv will attract anti-semitism.

This country has a fine tradition of tolerance for minority groups.

Why Can't The Rabbis Just Grant A Dispensation?

There is no concept of "dispensation" in Jewish law. The establishment of an Eruv is the time-honoured method of enabling orthodox Jews to carry outside of their homes on the Sabbath.

Who Will Pay For The Eruv?

The cost of construction and ongoing maintenance will be borne by the voluntary contributions from a number of sponsors and from the large number of Eruv users in the local community.

Aren't You Concerned By The Opposition?

Many proposals cause controversy when they are first mooted. It is commonly found that once the proposal is implemented the public wonders what all the fuss was about. The experience in the many cities world-wide where Eruvs have been established is that the people who don't use them are totally unaware of their existence.

As one Councillor said in support of the proposal at the earlier Planning Committee meeting: "*If the Eruv went up overnight, no-one would notice the next morning!*".

For further information please contact
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OUR FAR-FLUNG CORRESPONDENTS

DRAWING THE LINE

In London, the battle that erupted over a request from the Orthodox raised questions about the place of Jews in English society, and what kind of society it is.

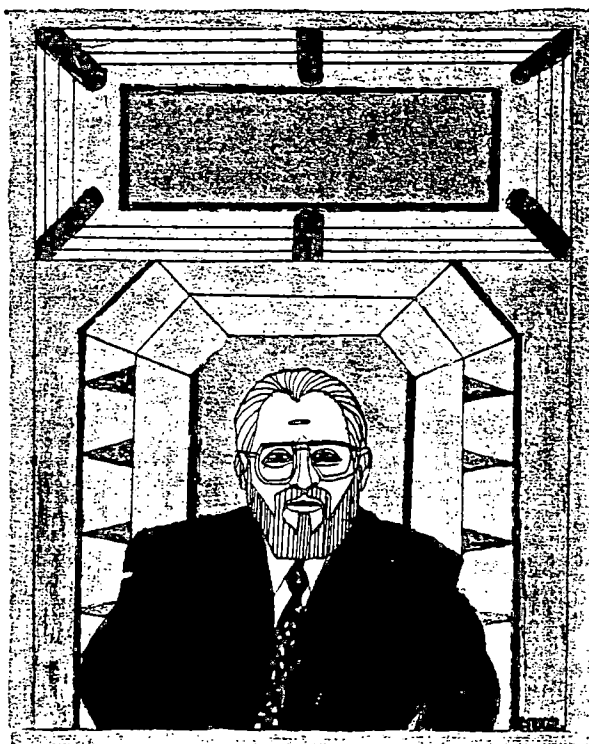
BY CALVIN TRILLIN

MATTHEW LEWIN remembers thinking that it seemed innocuous enough at the time. In Northwest London, the Barnet local council was being asked by a group of Orthodox Jews for planning permission to erect clusters of posts around the area

in the case of the eruv proposed for Northwest London, for instance, existing sections of the Northern Line and the M1 Motorway. In other countries, millions of people were living in eruv without even being aware of it. There are dozens of them in Israel and in the

United States. Melbourne, Australia, has an eruv. By chance, an eruv established in Washington, D.C., several years ago by the Keshet Israel Synagogue includes both the White House and the Supreme Court.

The six-and-a-half-square-mile area that was to be enclosed by the eruv proposed for Northwest London—it included Golders Green and Hendon and the Hampstead Garden Suburb—has a substantial minority of Jewish residents. Some of the Orthodox among them observe Sabbath restrictions that include a prohibition against carrying anything unless they are within their own private domain. On the Sabbath, for instance, a strictly Orthodox mother can take her baby from the



Of the Sabbath rule, Alan Kimche told officials, "We consider it important, and we ask you to respect that."

for religious purposes—twenty-foot posts connected near the top with fishing line. The idea was to create an enclosure called an eruv, a word that Lewin, who was then a deputy editor and is now editor of the *Hampstead & Highgate Express*, had never heard before. Presumably, most of the *Ham & High's* readers, whether Jewish or Gentile, knew as little about the subject as Lewin did. For planning purposes, the people making the application said, the important thing to know about an eruv is that it exists mainly in the minds of people who believe in it. Most of its boundaries tend to be in place already—

playpen in the parlor and carry him over to his high chair in the kitchen, but she cannot pick him up during the two- or three-block walk to the synagogue. She cannot take a casserole to a shut-in across the street or push an invalid to services in a wheelchair. Pushing, the rabbis decided a long time ago, is carrying.

Since ancient times, procedures have been established for creating what amounts to cooperative private territory—an eruv—so that carrying can extend to a shared courtyard, or a common stairway between apartments, or, these days, a patch of a modern city. A scholar of Jewish law

CHRIS KUHL

would find it unremarkable that the Talmud contains both a prohibition against carrying on the Sabbath and a procedure for modifying that prohibition, but to others the idea of an eruv tended to sound, as the *Independent Magazine* put it, "more than a little weird"—what the average Anglican resident of Northwest London might have called a fiddle. On the other hand, almost any religious ritual—the swallowing of Communion wafers, for instance, or the procedure for having someone declared a saint—sounds weird to a nonbeliever. The point, the group seeking planning permission said, was that those who did believe in an eruv could be accommodated by being allowed to connect the existing boundaries with wires stretched across eighty-five posts in an area that already had forty or fifty thousand posts of one sort or another. "In our tradition, there is the principle that when one party benefits and the other party loses little or nothing, the first party shall be permitted to proceed," the emeritus Chief Rabbi, Lord Jakobovits, has said. The secular version of that, stated by a rather nonobservant Jewish publisher, is "Sure it's absurd and irrational to believe that your life is going to be changed by the presence of a wire, but it's even more absurd and irrational to oppose it."

A lot of people did oppose it. As soon as the proposal became public, anti-eruv groups were formed. Lawyers were hired. Petitions were gathered. Dozens of letters were written to the *Ham & High* and other local newspapers. For a time, the eruv proposed for N.W. 11 and N.W. 4 was an issue of passionate contention at dinner parties in North London, whether the dinner was within the proposed area or not. The planning committee of the Barnet council—reversing the recommendation of its staff planning office—denied permission for the eruv. When an inspector from the Department of the Environment was assigned to hold a public inquiry into the appeal of that ruling, it took two weeks for him to hear from all those who wanted to testify. At around that time—in December of 1993, two years after the planning application—the *Guardian* began a story on the eruv by saying, "A bizarre madness seems to have taken hold of a north London suburb, with predictions of pitched battles on Hampstead Heath and warnings of Bosnian-style ethnic disintegration."

There are some who say that the eruv



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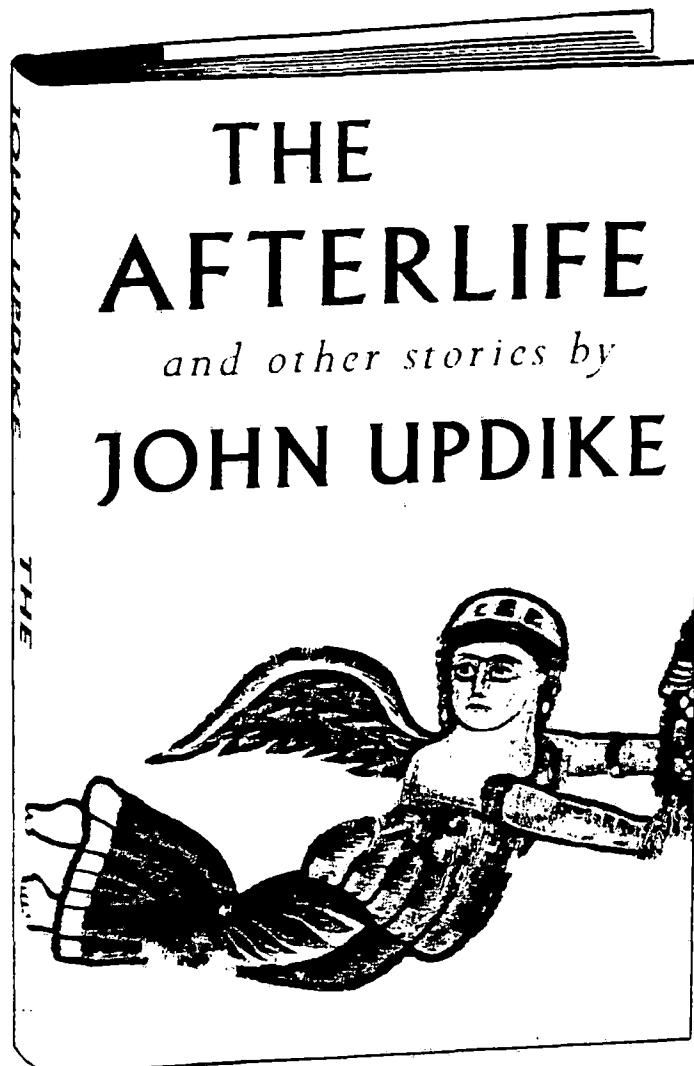


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proponents mishandled their campaign—that they were too aggressive and too quick to accuse anyone who disagreed with them of anti-Semitism. ("The English are, in the end, pretty fair-minded, but they don't like to be hounded or lobbied," someone sympathetic to the idea of an eruv has said.) There are people among the advocates of the eruv who believe that there was a conspiracy to do the project in. They point to a banner headline ("JEWISH ZEALOTS: WE'LL PATROL ERUV") that appeared in the *Ham & High* over a story revealing the purported minutes of a Jewish vigilante cell—a document that the police dismissed as a crude forgery but that many people apparently used as the source for their vision of pitched battles on the Heath. Upon reflection, Matthew Lewin thinks that neither flawed strategy nor a conspiracy was required to make the project controversial. "It took off on its own," he has said. "The feedback flooding in here was amazing. This goes to people's identity. They see it as somehow changing their identity."

THOSE who believe that the campaign for the eruv was bungled point to the annual general meeting of the Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust in September of 1992—the meeting that first brought the proposal to the attention of the North London public. The Hampstead Garden Suburb, which is just north of Hampstead itself, was established around the turn of the century as a place where people of every class and age could live together harmoniously in verdant surroundings. Its spectrum of housing ranged from near-mansions to rows of artisans' cottages done in English-vernacular architecture. The assortment of classes did not materialize; the artisans' cottages turned out to be too expensive for artisans. But before the real-estate boom of the seventies—a period when the Hampstead Garden Suburb was, in the words of a longtime resident, "afflicted with the affluent"—it had attracted more than its share of nonbelievers and Quakers and the sort of residents who are sometimes described broadly as "people in sandals."

Some sections of the Suburb, as it is known locally, now have a high proportion of Jews. There are also a good number of Japanese and Arabs. There are

even Americans. But the impression an outsider gets from driving through its quiet streets, passing some houses that look as if they might have been snatched from a National Trust village in Kent and replanted intact, is an impression of enduring Englishness. If the Suburb failed to become a model of class mixing, it did become a model of town planning, and it has been declared by the Department of the Environment a "Conservation Area of Outstanding Architectural or Historical Interest." Its residents seem to pour the energy once generated for a variety of causes into seeing that it remains just the way it is. Listening to stories of the frustrations faced by homeowners who wanted to alter their houses in relatively minor ways, a visitor can come to feel that it might be easier to get a slow child into Cambridge than to change your porch railing in the Hampstead Garden Suburb.

The annual general meeting of the Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust is normally the sort of affair at which the loudest disturbance might be the tinkle of a pair of eyeglasses falling to the floor as the person holding them nods off. The 1992 meeting was not like that at all. The chairman of the Trust Council, Lord McGregor of Durris, had written to the Barnet planning officer strongly objecting to the proposal for an eruv, and eruv proponents, enraged at learning of the letter, had asked their supporters to attend the meeting in order to "demonstrate the commitment of our community to the freedom of religious practice and against anti-Semitism wherever it arises and in whatever guise." Lord McGregor, who has lived in a wooded cul-de-sac of the Suburb since shortly after the Second World War, is what in England is sometimes called one of the great and the good—the sort of people who, being great, are invited to serve on royal commissions and, being good, see it as their duty to do so. A former sociology professor with credentials in the liberal community, he is now the chairman of the Press Complaints Commission. When he tried to explain his views at the annual general meeting, he was shouted down with cries of "Resign!" and "Shame!" Because part of his letter to the planning officer had been devoted to deploring any de-

viation from the strictly regulated appearance of the Suburb, eruv advocates produced photographs demonstrating that the windows of Lord McGregor's own house were not leaded in the manner clearly called for in Suburb regulations. The photographs were not even of the front windows: somebody had presumably poked a camera through the hedges surrounding the English garden of Lord and Lady McGregor. Lord McGregor did resign, on the spot. The chairwoman of the Suburb's residents' association summed up the evening as "the most dreadful, awful meeting I've ever been involved with." The main headline on the Hendon & Finchley Times coverage said "ZOOM LENS SPIED ON MCGREGOR'S HOME."

Perhaps because of that first raucous meeting, perhaps because of the sort of place it is, the Hampstead Garden Suburb became the center of resistance to the eruv. Nobody found it odd that so much of the opposition was coming from an area that was to have only eight posts—all of them in a wooded area that wasn't within sight of any houses. Although some residents of Northwest London were genuinely concerned about the eruv on the conventional planning grounds of aesthetic impact and maintenance and safety, the argument went way beyond the homeowner who didn't want a post in front of his parlor window or the English bird-lover concerned that the wires could be a hazard to his feathered friends ("Our first priority must be toward the birds").

Most of the anti-eruv letters received by the inspector did begin with a sentence or two about street clutter, but most of them went on from there, often to some of the same issues that Lord McGregor had mentioned in his original letter. They said that in an area where people of diverse backgrounds had always lived peacefully together by treating religion as a private matter it was divisive for a minority to foist its religious symbols on everyone else ("One of the bases of toleration is that no sect should behave in such a manner as to affront others," Lord McGregor had said), and as proof of that they pointed to the divisiveness that had already become evident. They said that the use of public land for religious symbols would



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be a precedent that could end up with, as Lord McGregor wrote, totem poles on the Heath. They said that the eruv poles would be a magnet for anti-Semitic hoodlums. They said that the wires would remind refugees from Nazi Germany, many of whom had settled in the area just before and just after the war, of ghettos and concentration camps. They said that the addition to existing street clutter was being proposed not so that all residents could receive some necessary service but simply so "a small group of people could undertake to break their own rules."

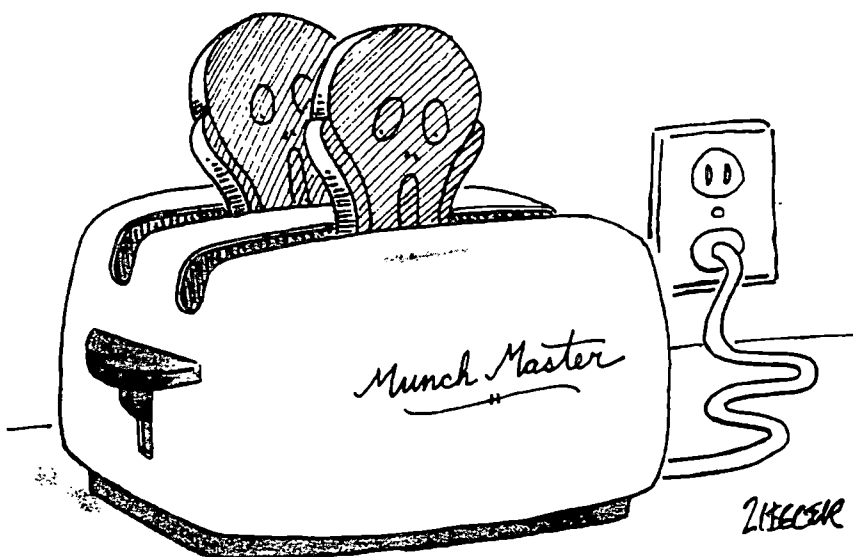
The contention that seemed to be made most often and most vehemently by eruv opponents was one that Lord McGregor hadn't mentioned—that the eruv would create another kind of ghetto. As opponents saw it, the eruv boundaries would signify an area where Jews live, and more Jews would come to live there in order to avail themselves of the eruv. The newcomers envisioned were what Londoners sometimes call Stamford Hill Jews—after a Northeast London neighborhood that has also been referred to as Volvo City, because some of its residents, Hasidim and ultra-Orthodox Jews, tend to drive large families around in Volvo station wagons. (During Hanukkah, the Lubavitchers

among them attach menorahs to the Volvos' roof racks.) There are already a number of ultra-Orthodox Jews in Golders Green; in the evening, men in black suits and beards can be seen hurrying off to worship at tiny synagogues. Particularly in the Hampstead Garden Suburb, a lot of people seemed to see the eruv posts and wires as the equivalent of neon signs that would blink alternately "Jewish Neighborhood" and "Strange Orthodox Jews in Funny Clothes Please Come to Live Here." The president of the Hampstead Garden Suburb Conservative organization, making a point that was repeated by people across the political spectrum, said that the eruv, by attracting more Jews to the area, would "upset the balance of the social mix. When you take a disproportionate number of any minority group into an area it changes the character." The name of the president of the Hampstead Garden Suburb Conservative organization is Norma Blausten. What some advocates of the eruv found most galling was that many—perhaps most—of the most vehement opponents of the project were themselves Jews.

ENGLISH Jews, most of whom descend from the same wave of immigration that brought so many Eastern

European Jews to the United States, have traditionally had to grapple with a problem that can be difficult for an American Jew to grasp: they are not English. Unlike the Jews who came to America in the decades around the turn of the century, Jews who landed in England were not just one of any number of immigrant groups arriving in a country that announced right at the entrance (using the words of a Jewish poet) that it welcomed every country's "masses yearning to breathe free." The Jews who got off the boat in England were the bulk of the immigrants arriving in a country historically wary of foreigners. (When Parliament passed a law restricting immigration in 1905, there was no doubt which immigrants it had in mind.) England made no claim to being a pluralistic society. It was inhabited not by a collection of immigrants who were bound by a set of beliefs but by people who had become The English—a nationality whose monarch presided over an established Christian church and whose Parliament until the middle of the nineteenth century refused to seat any members who had not been baptized. In the phrase of Dan Jacobson, the South African Jewish novelist, who has lived in London for many years, English Jews felt that they had been given a room in the house but were not part of the family. They felt more like boarders. Those who were born before the Second World War still tend to identify themselves as British rather than English—lumping themselves, somewhat uncomfortably, with the Welsh and the Scots.

Although anti-Semitism is hardly unknown in the mainstream of English society, it is often associated with the edges—with people who are sometimes spoken of as yobs and nobs. The yobs, once heavily represented by black-shirted thugs in East End street battles, are still present, in reduced numbers, as the skinheads, who are seen by some as a threat to eruv posts. Among the nobs, the English upper class, a sort of parlor anti-Semitism remains ingrained. After the *Spectator* published musings recently on the possibility that the American entertainment industry may be controlled by a cabal of Jews who don't dress terribly well, one Jewish editor in London called the article a prime example of "genteel English anti-Semitism," and



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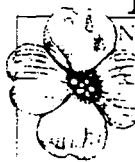
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the *Spectator's* editor, who is also Jewish, defended it as reflecting, at worst, "British snobbery." Those two phenomena have always been difficult to separate. At a time when Margaret Thatcher, who preferred self-made people to Tory old boys, was seen as having an unusually high number of Jews among her advisers, one of them resigned, and Harold Macmillan was widely reported to have said (at his club, appropriately), "I see there are now more Etonians than Estonians in the Cabinet."

On the whole, though, Jews in England have faced less overt hostility in modern times than the Jews of most other countries, and they have achieved success and prominence in a variety of fields way out of proportion to their numbers in the population. Still, English Jews often feel what has been described as a sort of otherness, a feeling common to longtime boarders. Traditionally, the way they dealt with that otherness was to keep their heads down. Jews tended to abide by the principle that was expressed rather starkly in a letter about the eruv printed in the *Hendon & Finchley Times*: "England is basically a Christian country and if other faiths choose to live here they should not disrupt local populations." (Lord Soper, the former president of the Methodist Conference, seemed to be reflecting that view when he called the eruv "a piece of impertinence.") Living in a country that does not prize ethnic differences or foreign ways, Jews have concentrated on being followers of a religion rather than members of an ethnic group—loyal subjects who happen to worship at a different building on a different day. Jews in public life have tended to have decent English accents and quiet English names. There are only three hundred thousand or so Jews in England, but it is axiomatic among people who discuss such matters that a difference in numbers alone is not what accounts for the absence of an English equivalent of, say, Borscht Belt comedy or the Jewish-American novel.

Of course, some longtime boarders found it stifling to tiptoe up the stairs when family discussions were going on in the parlor, or to come up with an obligation elsewhere around Christmas. A Jewish lawyer who is prominent in public life has often told the story of returning with a Jewish friend to England in

the late fifties after they had put in a year or two of graduate study in the United States—a period during which both of them had felt liberated by being open participants in the noisy give-and-take among American ethnic groups. "We pulled into Southampton and we looked down at the dock," he says. "There was a sea of chalky-white English faces, and our hearts fell."

BEFORE the great influx of immigrants, English Jews had organized themselves into religious institutions that reflected an English way of doing things. There was a Chief Rabbi, the sort of position historically less established among Jews than among the co-religionists of the Archbishop of Canterbury. The union of congregations that the Chief Rabbi presided over—the United Synagogue—was actually established by an act of Parliament in 1870. Until twenty-five or thirty years ago, its council included members of the great Anglo-Jewish families known as the Cousinhood—people like the Rothschilds and the Montagus, who had been in England for generations when the Eastern Europeans arrived. The United Synagogue carried on Jewish worship with English formality; until not long ago, the officers of its congregations appeared in services wearing top hats. The services were Orthodox. For a variety of reasons, the United Synagogue remained Orthodox, although its interpretation of Orthodoxy was rather expansive until the Cousinhood was supplanted in the leadership by Jews of more recent origin. Compared with the United States, a relatively large percentage of English Jews—even English Jews with decent English accents and quiet English names—are at least nominally Orthodox. They may even observe the Sabbath, although probably not strictly enough to abstain from carrying their house keys. Jewish young people from around North London congregate on the streets of Hampstead once a week—the young women among them are sometimes called beccs, from the name Rebecca—and their night for such socializing is Thursday. On Friday night, many of them are expected to be home with their families.

Although the United Synagogue's percentage of synagogue membership is shrinking, it remains by far the largest

Jewish religious institution in England. To the irritation of people who belong to what Americans would call Conservative or Reform congregations, or to no congregation at all, the Chief Rabbi of the United Synagogue is still seen as the spokesman of the Jews. In recent decades, the United Synagogue has grown more Orthodox—a number of its younger rabbis got their rabbinical training from the Lubavitchers; the Chief Rabbi will not appear on a public platform with rabbis of more liberal versions of Judaism—but many people who might go to services only on the High Holy Days, if then, continue their membership in it. The United Synagogue is, after all, the Jewish equivalent of the Established Church. In the words of Sidney Brichto, an American rabbi and author who has spent many years in England, "What's the difference which shul you don't go to?"

In the past few years, of course, England has become much more of a collection of immigrants than it used to be—Commonwealth immigrants from the West Indies and the Indian subcontinent, Europeans moving in and out freely through the open borders of the European Union. The faces on the dock at Southampton are no longer uniformly chalky. England is no longer the sort of place in which the only religious building that truly fits into a quiet suburb is an Anglican church—a building that always seems architecturally appropriate and, given Anglican attendance figures, has the added advantage of causing very little traffic. There is a mosque in Regent's Park. State schools that are predominantly, say, Sikh or Muslim can opt out of the requirement to have school prayers of a "mainly Christian character." In the words of Vanessa Feltz in the London *Jewish Chronicle*, "There is no longer a homogeneous 'norm' from which we are excluded." English Jews in their twenties and thirties are more likely than their parents to describe themselves as English, but they are also more likely to identify themselves as Jews. "There's a strong generational split," Matthew Kalman, who edits *New Moon*, a magazine aimed at younger Jews, has said, pointing out that Jews actively opposed to the eruv are from the older generation. "Young people believe that Jews in

a multicultural society—like gay people, like black people—have to demand their rights. Our parents' generation are used to Jews' being invisible. They like being together but they don't like to admit it. They think the Gentiles don't see a lot of Jews in N.W. 11. The eruv threatens their invisibility."

New Moon is committed to encouraging Jewish "cultural ethnicity" among its readers—it explores Jewish literature and films and food and comedy and dating rituals—but at this point the most striking aspect of increased Jewish awareness among the young is religious. In this era of group identification, some Jewish teen-agers who feel the need to identify with their group tend to do so by wearing yarmulkes in public. Some young business and professional people who were brought up in the relatively flexible version of Orthodoxy that was customary in the United Synagogue have joined congregations more strictly observant than the ones they went to as children. In the context of the way English Jews have been Jews, some think that the only way to be more Jewish is to be more observant.

One of the most vibrant of the new congregations is Ner Yisrael. It coalesced in the mid-eighties around Alan Kimche, an English rabbi who, after some years in Israel, returned to London in 1984 to run lunchtime Torah-study groups at firms in the City. In the left-right shorthand sometimes used to gauge degrees of strictness in observance, Ner Yisrael stands to the right of the United Synagogue and to the left of ultra-Orthodoxy, which is most prominently represented in London by a Stamford Hill union of congregations known as Adath. The members of Ner Yisrael, attracted from both United Synagogue and Adath backgrounds, tend to be people in their thirties who are university educated—the women as well as the men—and are working in, say, law firms or architectural firms or businesses in the general community. They don't wear black coats or side curls, but they are in fact strictly Orthodox Jews. On the Sabbath, they observe the prohibition against carrying anything outside their homes. The women among them, many of whom have full-time jobs, are less passive about being housebound on the Sabbath than



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"To this day, I can hear my mother's voice—harsh, accusing. 'Lost your mittens? You naughty kittens! Then you shall have no pie!'"

times could be applied to a modern urban setting. Some were worried that removing any reminder of the distinction between the Sabbath and other days would serve eventually to undermine strict observance, or that an enclosure might be breached without anyone's knowledge. Cynics said that the Adath rabbis were against the eruv because it wasn't their eruv or, more specifically, because it was Alan Kimche's eruv. ("They hate him. He's stealing their children.") It was even suggested that ultra-Orthodox men who now see their wives hardly at all on the Sabbath, given Friday-evening services and Friday-night celebrations for the births of sons and long services on Saturday, opposed the eruv because they

—like things the way they

ultra-Orthodox women might be. Both the men and the women tend to be more assertive about Jewish matters than their parents are. It was Alan Kimche and his followers who decided to push for an eruv in Northwest London and got an expert over from the United States to consult about the boundaries. On the theory that a congregation of only a hundred or so families could be easily swept aside by the powers that be, Ner Yisrael took its plan to the United Synagogue, which, after some hesitation, decided to embrace the eruv proposal. The band of people working for an eruv officially became the United Synagogue Eruv Committee. The project was now under the authority of the Chief Rabbi, who remains, whether his congregants require an eruv or not, the spokesman of the Jews.

JEWISH opponents of the eruv—accused regularly in the Jewish press of suffering from "inhibitions about their own Jewishness"—made no apologies for not wanting to live in a "Jewish neighborhood" or for not accepting the

definition of Jewishness offered by what they considered a small group of fundamentalist zealots. Some of them were indeed people with memories of ghettos or concentration camps. Some of them found it embarrassing not simply that Jews were, as they saw it, trying to force something on their neighbors but that the something in question struck many people as an insanely legalistic bit of medieval hairsplitting—what one letter-writer called a "magic schlepping circle." The eruv, according to another letter-writer, made Jews appear to be "a totem- and taboo-ridden tribe."

In a bit of Jewish irony that people caught up in the controversy were probably unable to appreciate, the true fundamentalists—the Adath rabbis, who represent the sort of heavily bearded and strangely costumed Jews that a Hampstead Garden Suburb householder, Jewish or Gentile, would have been most worried about having as neighbors—were opposed to the project from the start. Some of them apparently had doubts about whether something that worked in a walled village in ancient

are. Chaim Bermant, who does a lively column for the *Jewish Chronicle*, wrote that the Adath rabbis, whom he sometimes refers to as the Men in Black, have "an instinctive aversion to anything which might make religious observance less burdensome and the holy Sabbath an actual source of joy for the observant."

TOWARD the beginning of the eruv controversy, Rabbi Kimche said that Gentile residents would not be affected by the eruv any more than they were affected by their area's postal code. In fact, there are many people, in London and elsewhere, who would fiercely resist any attempt to tamper with their postal code. Area codes are also closely held. When London changed to a system of two area codes a few years ago, there was grumbling in North London itself over which neighborhoods had been assigned to the new 081 code and which to the tonier 071 of Central London. People do define themselves partly by such ostensibly trivial tags, and the eruv committee seemed unprepared for

how resistant some residents of Northwest London were to the prospect of someone's tampering with the definition. Rabbi Kimche and his followers may also have underestimated how difficult it would be to explain that an eruv is not, in fact, a fiddle. At one point, he said not long ago, he told some officials, "You don't understand it, you won't understand it, and, quite honestly, you don't need to understand it. The point is that we want it, we consider it important, and we ask you to respect that."

Gentile residents who couldn't imagine accepting an eruv for the reasons expressed by Rabbi Kimche were, in the words of one person who favors the eruv, "less anti-Semitic than just not multicultural." Although eruv proposals have occasionally caused controversy in the United States, the way the argument played out in Northwest London was seen by a lot of people as peculiarly English—a reflection of how slowly England is changing toward pluralism. In the view of Ned Temko, an American, who edits the *Jewish Chronicle*, "England is becoming a multi-ethnic society, but it's deeply, fundamentally, uni-ethnic." Many residents of places like the Hampstead Garden Suburb would argue that they already have a multicultural neighborhood—one that would be threatened and divided by the sectarianism of the eruv—but the notion of multiculturalism traditionally associated with the Suburb amounts to people from a variety of backgrounds all acting more or less English. That has for years included a synagogue, as well as an Anglican church, but for a lot of people it still does not include a magic schlepping circle. According to one resident of the Hampstead Garden Suburb, the eruv committee "transcended the unwritten rules of the game. They were breaking the rule about being different."

A COUPLE of months after the inquiry into the eruv appeal, the inspector in charge forwarded his report to the Secretary of State for the Environment, who would make the final decision. The betting was that the report would recommend that planning permission for the eruv be granted. The inspector, after all, would presumably make his decision on the ground of planning policy rather than group rela-

tions. What the Secretary of State for the Environment would do was more difficult to divine. That decision, which had been expected to take several weeks, was not handed down for months—a delay that led to ornate speculation in N.W. 11. Politically, some evidence developed that the Conservatives had something to gain, at least in North London itself, by reversing the Barnet council's planning committee—in a council election last spring, a campaign by eruv advocates against their opponents on the committee was thought to have been one element in greatly reducing the normal margin of a couple of Conservative councilmen—but it was difficult to know whether a significant number of voters elsewhere might see a pro-eruv decision as a surrender to Jewish pressure. The person who happens to be the Secretary of State for the Environment, John Gummer, is a man who left the Anglican Communion for Rome after the Anglicans voted to permit the ordination of women, and those who speculated on his personal predilections were split as to whether a man so conservative religiously would be appalled by Orthodox Jewish paraphernalia in the streets of Northwest London or understanding of it.

Finally, this fall, more than six years after Ner Yisrael members went around with their American consultant mapping out boundaries, the Department of the Environment announced that the inspector had indeed recommended approval of the project and John Gummer had upheld that recommendation. One homeowner has appealed Gummer's decision to the courts, and there remain some bureaucratic hoops to go through. Eruv proponents, though, are optimistic that the eruv will be operational in a matter of months. In the meantime, Rabbi Kimche and his supporters hope to build some bridges to those who opposed the project, particularly the rabbis of Adath. For a while, the letters column of the *Ham & High* was reheated by Gummer's announcement, and the leader of an opposition group still says that the eruv may never go up. Rabbi Kimche believes that resistance in places like the Hampstead Garden Suburb will melt away only after the eruv is established and people realize that physically it hardly exists. "It's the concept that's disturbing," he says. ♦

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מרכז שטרנברג
לדעת ולימוד

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.

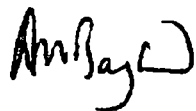
I have listened carefully to the arguments of those who have reservations about the eruv. I have to say that I do not believe its construction will cause an unacceptable level of disturbance or inconvenience to our neighbours. I am deeply sceptical of the suggestion that the existence of an eruv will 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". The signature is written in a cursive, somewhat stylized script.

RABBI A.M. BAYFIELD



ETHEREAL BOUNDARIES

Orthodox Jews should be allowed their enclave

Last night, John Major and President Clinton met to discuss affairs of state in a mystical Jewish enclosure. Like dozens of civic buildings in America, the White House lies within an *eruv*, a symbolic area in which many of the prohibitions of the Jewish sabbath are suspended. *Eruvim* are accepted happily as part of the social tapestry of American life. In contrast, the attempt by the Jewish community in Barnet, north London, to create such an enclave on British soil has triggered a fierce local row over the proper limits of tolerance and the risks of separatism.

The Talmudic idea of an *eruv*, often attributed to King Solomon, is to "privatise" an area spiritually and make it a symbolic home for Jews. Within its ethereal boundaries, believers are permitted to carry keys, handkerchiefs and spectacles and to push wheelchairs and prams on the Sabbath, as they would in their own houses. Advocates of the Barnet *eruv*, which would enclose six square miles of leafy north London with almost invisible wires and natural boundaries, claim that it would make life easier for many Jewish people and reinforce their community's sense of identity without infringing the freedoms of non-Jews.

The borough has split angrily over the proposal, which is backed by the United Synagogue and the Chief Rabbi, Jonathan Sacks. Lord McGregor's scepticism forced him to resign as chairman of the Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust last September; since then, fears of Jewish fundamentalism have been voiced with increasing candour by the area's other communities. Within the Jewish community, there are many, including some Orthodox believers, who are nervous of ghettoisation and fear an anti-

Semitic backlash. Some of those old enough to have lived through the Holocaust feel that Jewish people should never again be penned in by wire.

An *eruv* is not the same as an Indian reservation, a Swiss canton or a local authority, however. Not all boundaries mark out one zone of power from another as a warning to trespassers. Some of the markings that man scores into the surface of the planet are transparent and permeable, like a line of longitude or a leyline. The limits of an *eruv* are of immense significance to those that believe in its mystical meaning, but should be of practically none to those who do not. Few agnostics in this country are aware of the boundaries of the Anglican provinces or parishes, or are offended by the ancient ceremonies which mark them out, such as the "beating of the bounds".

The Barnet proposal shows that an *eruv* need not be aesthetically offensive. Since most of the suggested enclosure is already marked out by buildings or roads, only 85 poles linked by wire would be needed in an area which already has 40,000. Only the concern of bird-lovers ruled out the use of transparent nylon rather than wire. Such markers would scarcely be an eyesore or grossly offensive to non-Jewish sensibilities.

Britain is a land of crossable boundaries, in which Burke's "small platoons" co-exist and the Rambler has rights as well as the property owner. To be acceptable, *eruvim* will need a high degree of democratic consensus from community groups, town halls and central government. But, introduced with sensitivity and respect for others' feelings, they could be a positive addition to the nation's religious geography and help define the proper boundaries of pluralism.

THURSDAY FEBRUARY 25 1993



THE TIMES

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Edward Black
32 Hampstead Way
London NW11 7JL

Telephone: 0181 455-0454(H); 0171 246-6216(O)
Telefax: 0181 930-4203(H); 0171 329-4465(O)
E-mail: eblack@dircon.co.uk(H); eblack@mayerbrown.com(O)

July 8, 1997

The Editor
Hampstead and Highgate Express
By Facsimile to: 0171 483 3566

RE. ERUV

Dear Sir,

It is clear from views expressed in your letters column, in the July 7 BBC Omnibus program and elsewhere that certain opposition to the eruv is deeply felt. While, of course, I acknowledge this and do not question the sincerity of opponents' views, some of the opposition appears to be based on a misunderstanding of what an eruv is - and what it is not.

A number of opponents condemn the eruv as an attempt to establish a sectarian boundary, or as a sinister institution. If it were, I too would oppose it, but it isn't, and I don't.

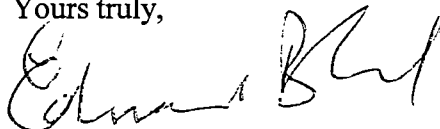
The boundary of an eruv is of significance only to those Sabbath (Shabbat) observant Jews who utilise it. It is of no significance to others. The establishment of an eruv will confer a real benefit on many thousands of Shabbat observant residents of North West London without detriment to other residents. The eruv is a perfect example of an institution whose establishment will benefit many and harm no-one.

The fact that eruvs are non-threatening and positive is evident from the dozens of eruvs already established all over the world. Every major city in North America has one - Toronto, Phoenix, Memphis, Los Angeles, Boston, Chicago, Providence, Miami and Washington D.C., to name but a few. Outside North America there are eruvs in Johannesburg, Melbourne, Gibraltar, Antwerp and Strasbourg. The Washington D.C. eruv includes the White House. The Strasbourg eruv includes the European Court of Human Rights. None of these eruvs has in any way caused the sort of harm feared by London eruv opponents.

The simple fact is that Jewish law permits carrying and pushing prams and wheelchairs on Shabbat in a private home and in an area surrounded by an eruv. Under Jewish Law there are limits on the size of the area which an eruv may cover. It is, therefore, impossible to implement proposals made in earlier letters printed in these columns that the M25 or the shores of the British Isles should be the boundary in an eruv. Similarly, there is no mechanism in Jewish Law which permits religious authorities to grant dispensations declaring carrying to be permissible - nor to change any other centuries-old laws.

It is a shame that much opposition to the eruv is based on misunderstandings. I hope that this letter goes some way towards clarifying matters.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Edward B. Black', written in a cursive style.

Edward B. Black
Member, United Synagogue Eruv Committee

3rd December 1993

6

D.E. Inspector
Eruv Planning Inquiry
Barnet Town Hall
The Burroughs
London NW4

5th floor
Anson House Hospital -

Dear Sir

ERUV APPEALS

I should like you to ask the Secretary of State to imagine a bright sunny Saturday some time next summer. A young Orthodox Jewish family is walking along a pleasant attractive residential street in Barnet. They have one young child in a push chair and another walking with them carrying a gift-wrapped parcel.

The couple are obviously happy and as they walk along they are greeted by a man leaning on his front garden gate. "Hello", says the man, "you seem to be enjoying yourselves".

"Yes", says the young mother, "isn't it wonderful? This is the first Sabbath since our Rabbis confirmed the existence of our Eruv so that we can carry outside the house. This means we can push the little boy's buggy and our daughter can carry a present. We are taking them to visit their grandmother".

"What makes the Eruv"? asks the man.

"Well, it's an area defined by the Rabbis", says the young father. "In a few places we have a few poles joined together with invisible wire, usually over roads and junctions but for over 90% of the perimeter we refer to existing physical features. For example in your street as long as we keep to this side of your garden fence and this side of the line of your neighbours' fences and walls on this side of the street, we can carry.

"Very good", says the man, "I hope I shall see you again. Good-bye".

With that, the couple continue on their way, their enjoyment increased by the man's kind words.

The man, being devout (but of unknown religion) and being moved by what he had heard goes indoors and offers a short prayer of thanksgiving:-

"My blessings have been increased. I gain pleasure from my garden, its fences and my gate. Now, at no cost to myself, my humble fence is helping that nice young couple. I can claim no credit but the sum total of human happiness has been increased. That gives me pleasure. Thank you".

During this time the young couple go further down the street and meet a second man at his gate, who demands, "What are you Jews doing out on Saturday?".

"Oh", says the young mother, "Isn't it wonderful? This is the first Sabbath since our Rabbis confirmed the existence of our Eruv so that we can carry outside the house. This means we can push the little boy's buggy and our daughter can carry a present. We are taking them to visit their grandmother".

"I've heard about that", says the second man. "You're trying to take over the area as a Jewish enclave". "No, no, that's not the case", says the young father. "The Eruv area is defined by our Rabbis solely for the purposes of allowing us to carry. It has no other significance. In a few places we have a few poles joined together with invisible wire, usually over roads and junctions, but for over 90% of the perimeter we refer to existing physical features. For example, in your street as long as we keep to this side of your garden fence and this side of the line of your neighbours' fences and walls on this side of the street, we can carry".

"How dare you!" shouted the second man. "You're using my fence for your Jewish religion without even asking. You taint my property with Jewishness and give my street a special Jewish meaning. I find that deeply offensive". And he rushes indoors.

The young couple continue on their way, their joy temporarily crushed by the vehemence of the second man's attack. But they soon regain their composure, remembering the kindness of the first man and the original reason for their happiness and by the time they arrive at the children's grandmother's house, they are ready to enjoy the day to the full, and do so.

Back at the second man's house, he rushes in to where his wife is enjoying making cakes for her weekday club. "It's intolerable", he shouts, "the Jews are using our street and our fence for religious purposes. We're polluted. There'll be hundreds of them walking up and down in a few weeks". And he goes on shouting and complaining for so long that his wife is also persuaded to be angry so that she loses all pleasure in what she is doing, and the second man seethes so much that he cannot concentrate on his favourite Saturday programme.

Sir, this may be a folksy story, but I ask you, and in his turn the Secretary of State, to consider wherein lies the evil, and where is that evil's relevance to the planning decision to be made.

Yours faithfully

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Eruv Sabbath, 1990

I am pleased to send greetings to Congregation Kasher Israel and to the Orthodox Jewish community in Washington as you celebrate the inauguration of the first eruv in the District of Columbia.

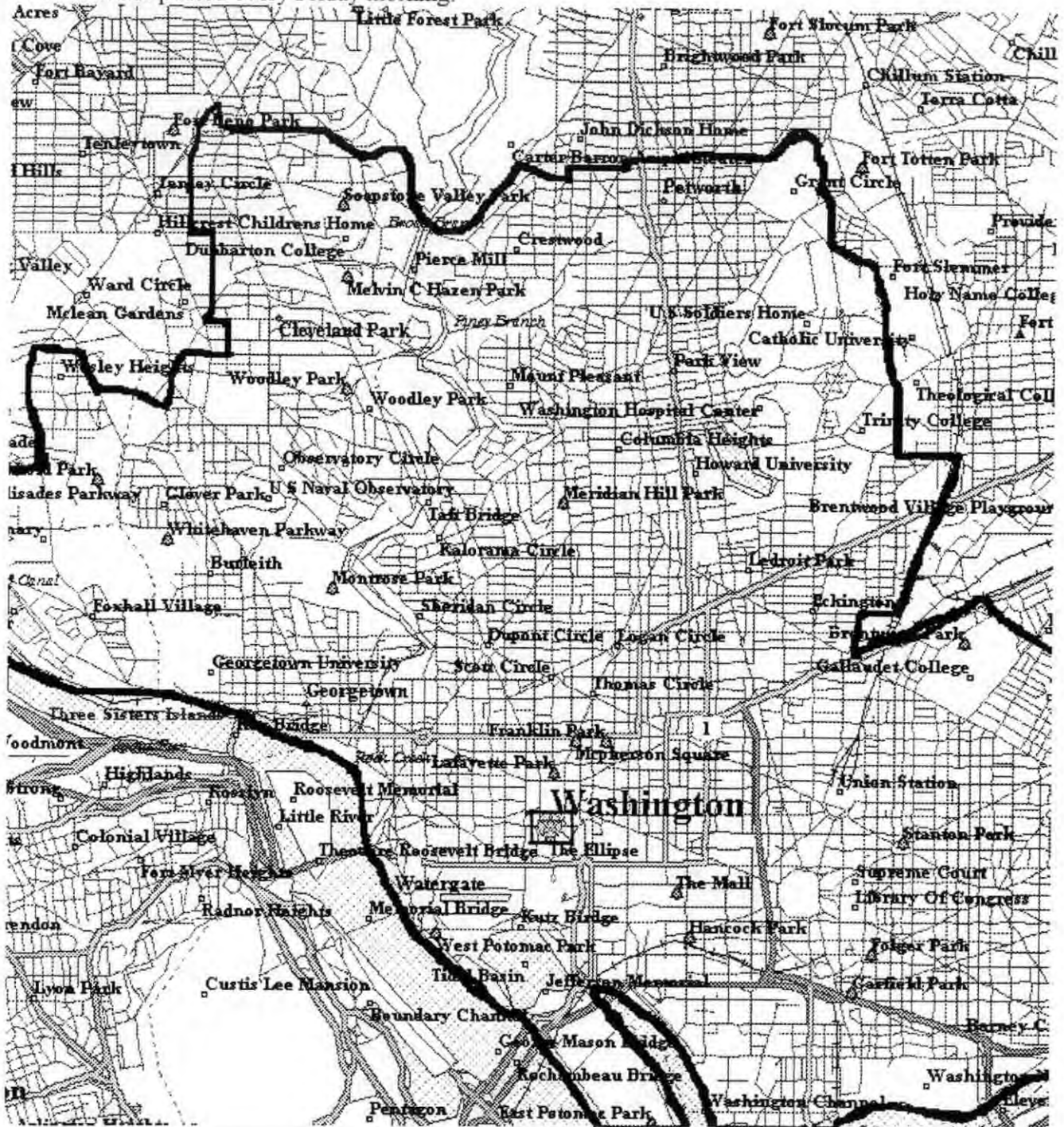
The construction of this eruv is particularly significant not only because it marks the growth of the Orthodox Jewish community in Washington but also because this city is our Nation's Capital. Indeed, there is a long tradition linking the establishment of eruvim with the secular authorities in the great political centers where Jewish communities have lived. In the words of a responsa of Rabbi Moses Sofer: "Bless the Lord, God of Israel, who has inclined the hearts of kings, rulers, and officers -- under whose sovereign jurisdiction we, the Jewish people find protection -- to grant permission to us to keep our faith in general, and specifically to establish eruvim in their thoroughfares, even on streets where the most important members of the government themselves live . . . in this city, there are places where we need to install a number of objects in order to create an eruv and we have not hidden our work, rather, it is publicized and open to all without doubt and permission has been granted."

Now, you have built this eruv in Washington, and the territory it covers includes the Capitol, the White House, the Supreme Court, and many other Federal buildings. By permitting Jewish families to spend more time together on the Sabbath, it will enable them to enjoy the Sabbath more and promote traditional family values, and it will lead to a fuller and better life for the entire Jewish community in Washington. I look upon this work as a favorable endeavor. God bless you.

The Rabbi Philip Rabinowitz Memorial Eruv

To check on the eruv status, call (202) 338-ERUV.

Eruv status is posted every Friday morning.



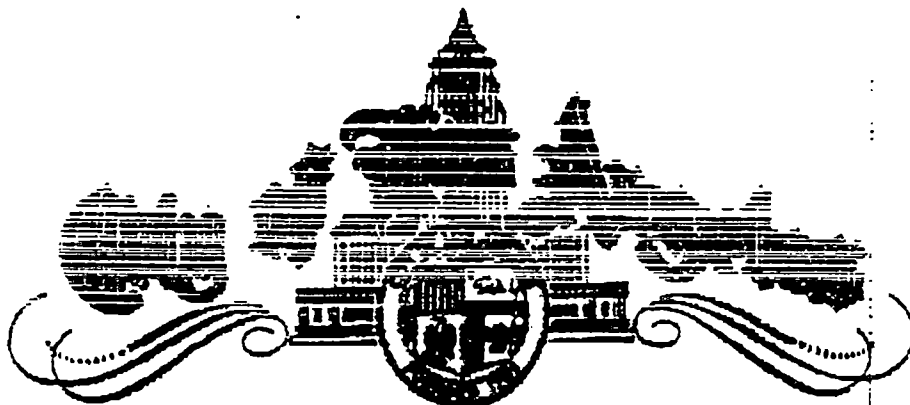
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[Joshua Sharf - jsharf@ix.netcom.com](mailto:jsharf@ix.netcom.com)

□ = location of The White House (this note added by E. Black)

8



CITY HALL
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012
(213) 468-3311

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

TOM BRADLEY
MAYOR

December 4, 1992

The Mayor & Town Planning Committee
Barnett Town Hall
The Boroughs, Hendon
London NW4
United Kingdom

Dear Mayor & Town Planning Committee:

It was with great pleasure that I took action some years ago which helped the members of Beth Jacob Congregation to celebrate the Sabbath more comfortably and meaningfully, simply by supporting their petition to erect an eruv.

The action was not without controversy here in Los Angeles, but the ultimate result was most gratifying. The fears expressed by those who were initially opposed to the eruv never materialized.

I hope that you will help the observant Jews in your community enjoy the observation of the Sabbath.

Sincerely,

TOM BRADLEY
Mayor

cc: Rabbi Abner Weiss

Petition to Barnet Council To Approbe the Eruv

*We, the undersigned, each eligible to vote in Barnet,
support the establishment of the Eruv in NW London*

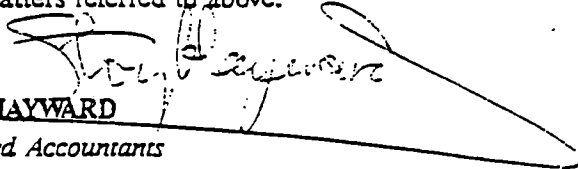
JS 100

To the members of the United Synagogue Eruv Committee

We have reviewed the 3,443 entries on the Eruv petition, delivered to Barnet Council in support of the application for planning in January 1993:

1. To ensure that the post code assigned to each address is correct for each entry on the petition;
2. Whether or not that address falls within the London Borough of Barnet;
3. Whether or not that address falls inside or outside of the proposed Barnet Eruv boundaries.

As a result of the above we confirm that the following analysis of the petition showing there to be 3,299 valid entries has been prepared in a correct and valid manner with respect to the three matters referred to above.


STOY HAYWARD

Chartered Accountants

London

13 May 1993

AUDITED STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF BARNET ERUV PETITION, JANUARY 1993

District	Postal Area	Total	% Total
Hendon	NW4	1,575	45.7%
Golders Green	NW11	814	23.6%
Finchley	N3	365	10.6%
Edgware	Middx	248	7.2%
E Finchley	N2	83	2.4%
Child's Hill	NW2	47	1.4%
N Finchley	N12	40	1.2%
Mill Hill	NW7	38	1.1%
Borehamwood	Herts	19	0.6%
Hampstead	NW3	19	0.6%
Whetstone	N20	19	0.6%
Southgate	N14	12	0.3%
Colindale	NW9	12	0.3%
New Barnet	EN5	3	0.1%
Muswell Hill	N10	2	0.1%
East Barnet	EN4	2	0.1%
Brunswick Pk	N11	1	0.0%
Total Valid within Barnet		3,299	95.9%
Illegible, Duplications etc		91	2.6%
Non Barnet		53	1.5%
Total Entries		3,443	100%
Valid within Eruv area		2,841	86%

TOTAL
REJECTED
144

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

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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.

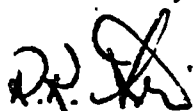
We suspect that the survivors who have previously expressed opposition to the Eruv, through no fault of their own, do not properly understand what an Eruv is. Of course we acknowledge the memories of those survivors. However, as you know from your examination of the plans, the Eruv only involves several 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.

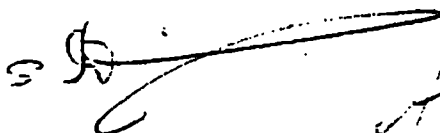
As each of the undersigned knows only too well, the Nazi camps and ghettos were maintained by Hitler and his henchmen to confine people against their will with a view to oppression and ultimate extermination. In our view, an Eruv is an expression of freedom and integration within the wider community. 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



**R. R. Aron
24 Allington Road
London NW4 3DE**



**S. S. Irving
7 Wykeham Court
Wykeham Road
London NW4 3DT**



**A. Perlmutter
8 Beaufort Gardens
London NW4**

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Barnet Eruv Application

Partial Timetable of Events to Date

Original planning application filed	Spring 1992
Public Works Committee grants approval	June 1992
Planning Committee rejects planning application	February 1993
Planning Appeal heard by Environment Department Inspector	December 1993
Security of State for the Environment grants planning consent	September 1994
High Court challenge by objectors filed	November 1994
High Court challenge by objectors withdrawn	February 1995
Revised planning application filed	August 1996
Revised planning application partially approved by Planning Committee	January 1997
High Court challenge by objectors fails	April 1997
Amendments to revised planning application filed	December 1997
Committee to hear planning application	June 1998

THE SEVEN LOCATIONS FOR WHICH PERMISSION IS SOUGHT

LOCATIONS 13 (WILDWOOD ROAD) AND 14 (HAMPSTEAD LANE)

Problems with the drawings for these two sites submitted with the August 1996 application decided in January 1997 were identified at a late stage of its processing. Although revised proposals were submitted to the Council (which the Applicant believes addressed the relevant concerns in respect of both of the sites), there was insufficient time to undertake the necessary consultations so that these two sites could be included within the matters that were put to the Committee on 8th January, 1997. As a result these revised locations did not form part of the planning permission issued on 15th January and, as set out in the Council's letter of 20th January, further consent is required in respect of them.

It should be noted that planning permission was given in respect of poles at both these locations by the Secretary of State when determining the appeal in 1994. In the case of Wildwood Road the Secretary of State's permission related to 7 poles, the current application contemplates 6 poles.

Location 13

The pole outside 1 Wildwood Rise has been relocated and one of the middle poles has been omitted such that the wire will now no longer cross over any land owned by the Corporation of London. We believe that this overcomes the objection.

Location 14

The problem with Location 14 (Hampstead Lane) in the previous application arose because, subsequent to the Secretary of State's October 1994 decision on the Applicant's appeals, the Council's boundary with the London Borough of Haringey was amended such that this location fell within Haringey. Unfortunately this point was not picked up until late in the processing of the last application and the Applicant has now amended its proposals so that the poles are both situated within Barnet.

LOCATION 20 (NORTH CIRCULAR ROAD)

The principle of poles in this location was considered and found acceptable by the Secretary of State when determining the appeal in 1994. However, since then there have been alterations to the North Circular Road in this area. This was recognised in the 8th January 1997 decision when, although the installation of poles in this location was approved, condition 5 required the submission for approval of revised details taking account of the North Circular Road alterations since the appeal. The drawings enclosed with the Application identify where the poles are now proposed. Since the road is now a dual carriageway so there will need to be 3 rather than 2 poles.

LOCATIONS 41 (HENDON WAY PAVEMENT) 42 (HENDON WAY/GREENFIELD GARDENS - FOOTPATH) 45 (PENNINE DRIVE) & 47 (CLITTERHOUSE PLAYING FIELDS - FOOTPATH)

These four locations, which were not part of the appeal scheme, were considered at the 8th January, 1997 Committee meeting and planning permission was refused because of Councillors' concerns regarding their location in all cases from a public safety point of view and, in the case of Location 45, from a visual amenity point of view.

The Applicant has amended each location and the drawings submitted with the application show the originally proposed location for the purpose of comparison.

It is submitted that all relevant concerns have now been addressed in relation to these locations.

THE ERUV ON ONE PAGE JUNE 1998

The Planning Committee granted planning permission for 33 pole sites in January 1997 by a vote of 18-0 with two abstentions. The pending application comprises 39 pole sites of which six remain to be approved and a seventh was approved in outline only. Between January and December 1997 it was necessary to deal with various technical minutiae -- in particular with respect to the completion of roadworks on the North Circular Road in East Finchley which had a material impact on the site for which further details were required to be submitted.

The proposed North West London Eruv is an important amenity which will enable thousands of Orthodox Jews in North West London, particularly families with young children and with elderly or disabled members to enjoy the Sabbath (Shabbat) to the full. The eruv will enable these families to attend the synagogue and to participate in community life on Shabbat. Although the eruv will greatly enhance the religious and spiritual life on Shabbat for those who accept its significance, taken in context and as a whole the eruv should have practically no impact on those who do not make use of it. An eruv is not in any sense mystical or holy, nor is it a claim on territory. It is of no more significance to those who do not make use of it than a postal district or street sign.

Under Orthodox Jewish law, Shabbat is a day set apart from the working week. Family time and spiritual pursuits are emphasised and certain activities associated with the working week are prohibited. Carrying and pushing wheelchairs and baby buggies is permitted in private homes and in community areas whose symbolic boundaries are marked by an eruv. An eruv is simply a practical method of denoting the area within which carrying and pushing wheelchairs and baby buggies is permitted.

There are well over 150 eruvim in communities all over the world -- and many more in Israel. Every major city in North America has one - Toronto, Phoenix, Memphis, Los Angeles, Boston, Chicago, Providence, Miami, New York City and Washington, D.C., to name but a few. Outside North America there are eruvs in Johannesburg, Melbourne, Gibraltar, Antwerp and Strasbourg. The Washington, D.C. eruv includes the White House. The Strasbourg eruv includes the European Court of Human Rights. The proposed North West London Eruv is the first large scale eruv proposed in the UK.

The proposed eruv has a circumference of about 11 miles. Approximately 10.4 miles consists of existing boundaries such as the M1 and the Northern Line of the Tube. In order to complete the eruv, the United Synagogue Eruv Committee has applied to Barnet Council for planning permission to put up a small number of posts to support some single strands of transparent nylon line which will span the gaps in the existing boundaries. The current proposal calls for a total 87 posts and 1042 metres of nylon line.

Jewish law permits carrying and pushing prams and wheelchairs on Shabbat in a private home and in an area surrounded by an eruv. Under Jewish law there are limits on the size of the area which an eruv may cover. It is, therefore, impossible to implement suggestions made in certain earlier press coverage that the M25 or the shores of the British Isles should be the boundary in an eruv. Similarly, there is no mechanism in Jewish Law which permits religious authorities to grant dispensations declaring carrying to be permissible. - nor to change any other centuries-old laws.

The United Synagogue Eruv Committee consists of the rabbis and lay representatives of the four United Synagogues within the proposed eruv and a number of independent orthodox synagogues within the area. The supervisory authority with respect to matters of Jewish law is the Chief Rabbi, Dr. Jonathan Sacks and the Court of the Chief Rabbi headed by Dayan (Rabbinical Judge) Chanoch Ehrentreu.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT EDWARD BLACK (PHONE) 0171 246 6216;
(FAX) 0171 329 4465**

REVISED PLAN
7th September 1997

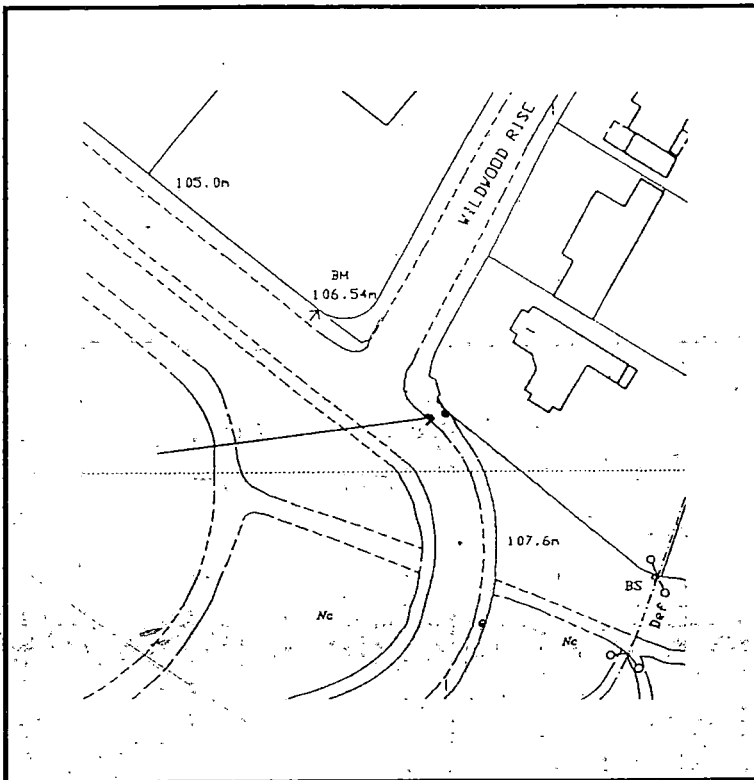


FIGURE 13
[EAST POST DETAIL]

WILDWOOD ROAD NW11

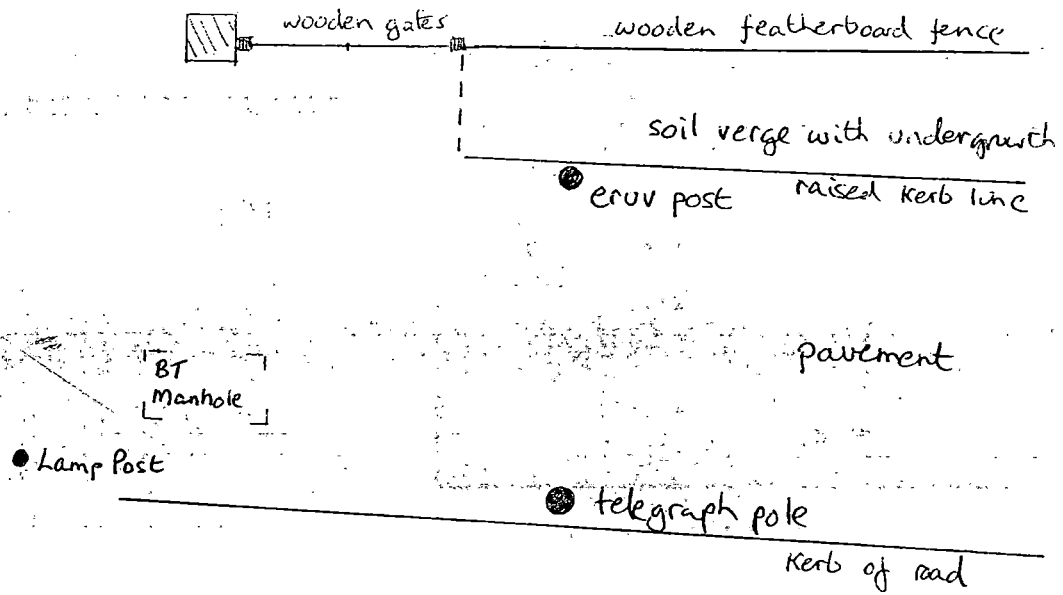
EXTRACT FROM TQ 2687 SW

1:1250

SCHEMATIC SHOWING LOCATION OF ERUV POST

13 EAST

SEPT '97

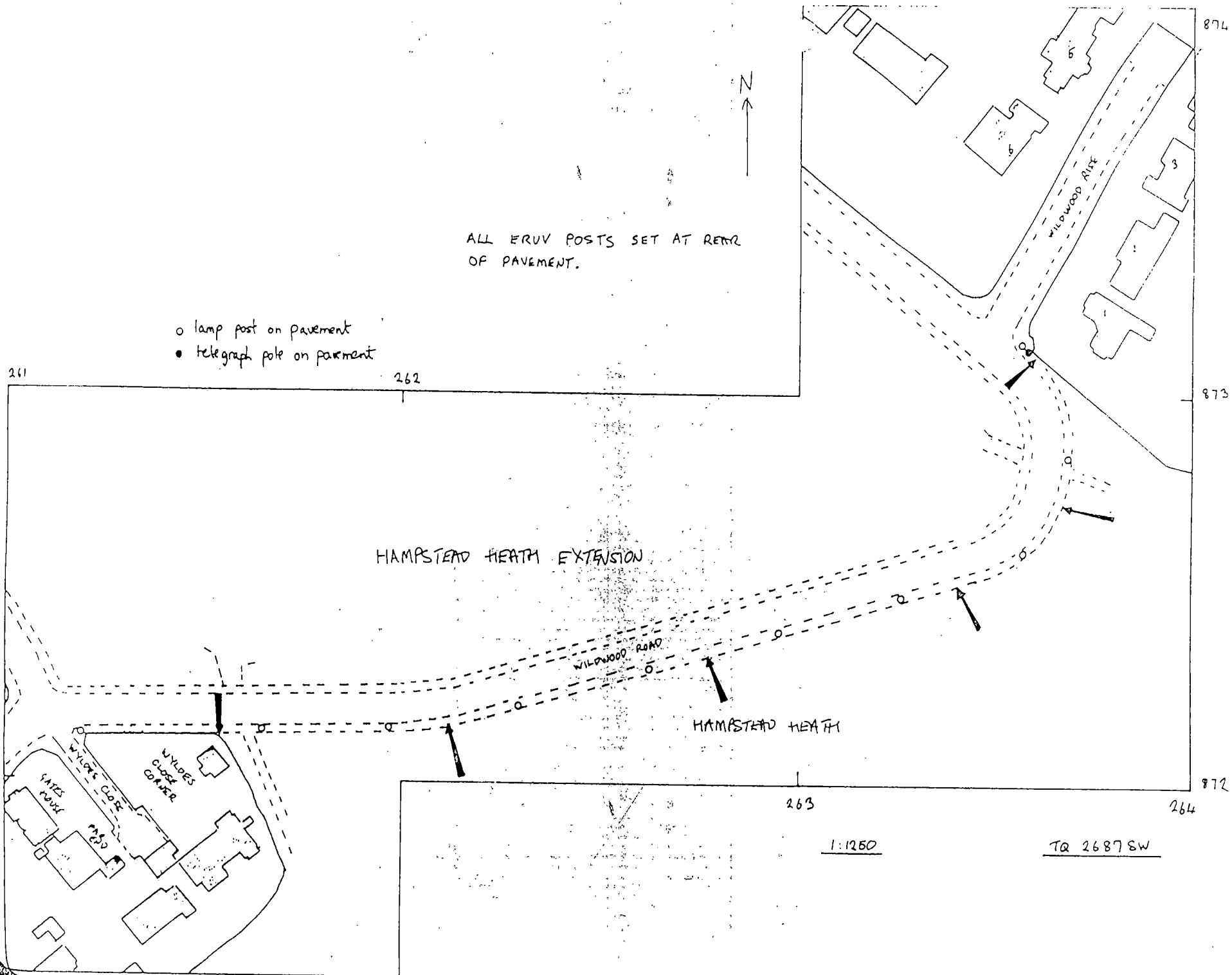


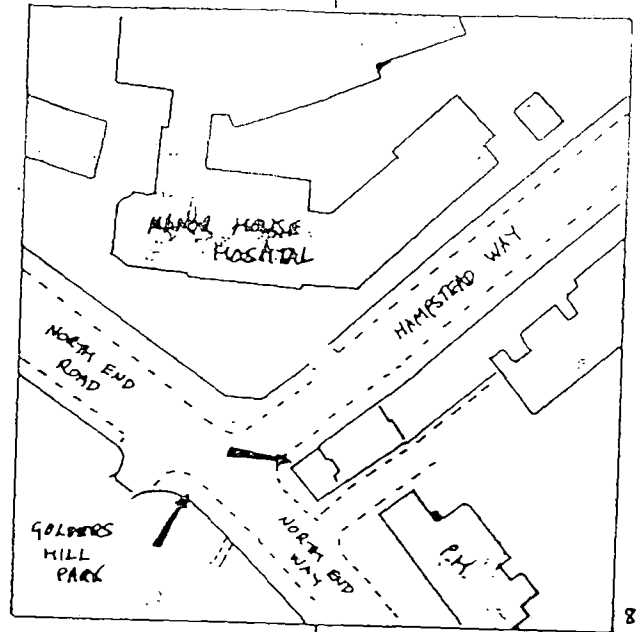
1m approx
do not scale

13

- lamp post on pavement
- telegraph pole on pavement

ALL ERUV POSTS SET AT REAR
OF PAVEMENT.





1:1250

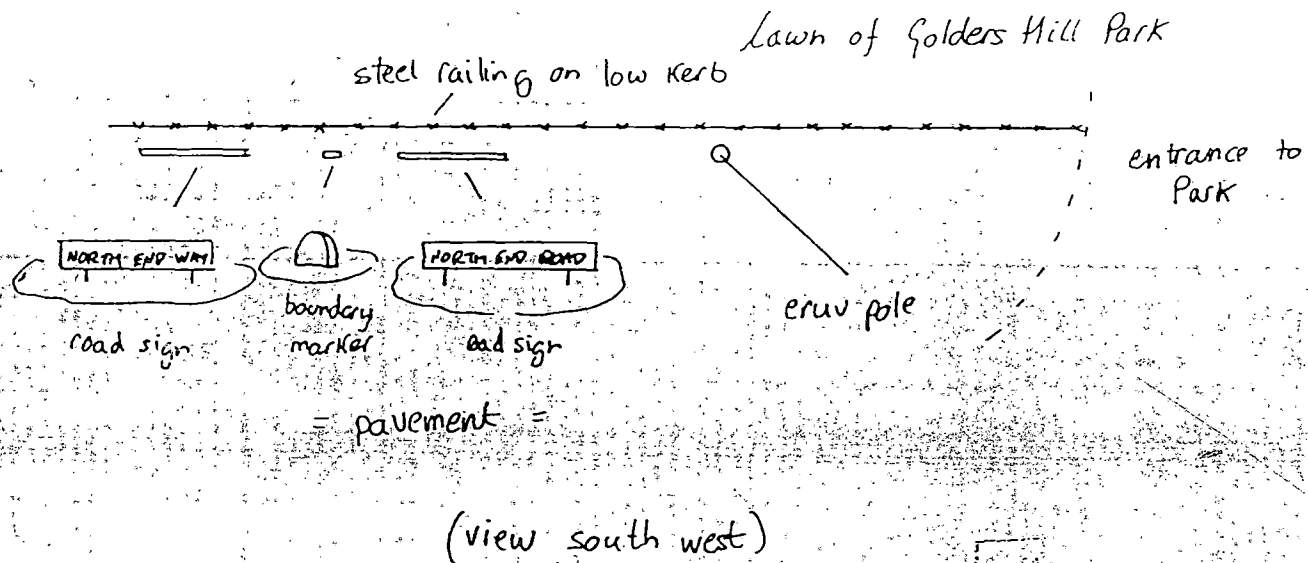
TQ 2587 SE
TQ 2687 SW

12 NORTH END WAY / ROAD NW11

AMENDMENT JANUARY 1993

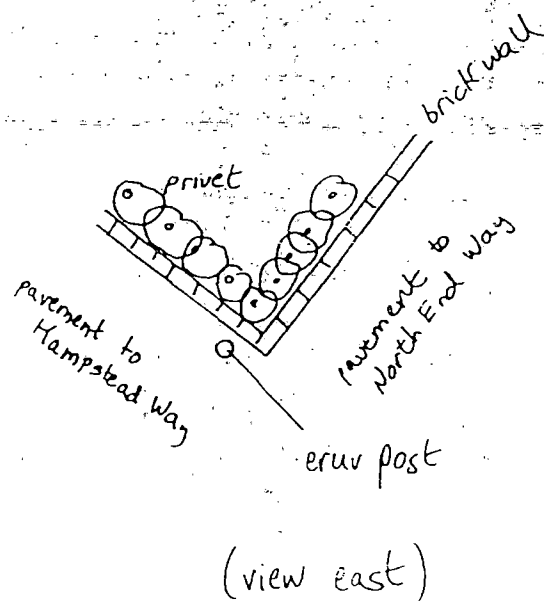
SCHEMATIC SHOWING LOCATION OF SOUTH-WEST POLE

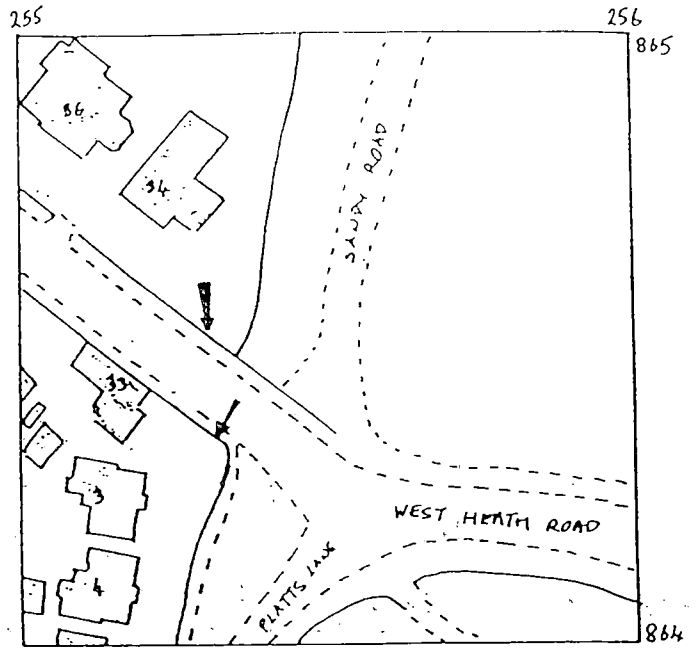
AT REAR OF PAVEMENT, 2.5 m NORTH WEST OF
ROAD SIGN BEARING LEGEND "NORTH END ROAD"
ADJACENT TO PARK'S PERIMETER STEEL FENCE.



21 NORTH EAST POLE

AT REAR OF PAVEMENT, c15cm
FROM BRICKWALL AND c15cm
FROM CORNER OF HAMPSHIRE
WAY AND NORTH END WAY.





1.1250

TQ 2586 SF

09: WEST HEATH ROAD, NW3

SCHEMATIC SHOWING LOCATION OF POSTS

1/ NORTH POST

AT REAR OF PAVEMENT, 15m FROM WOODEN GARDEN FENCE IN FRONT OF 34 WEST HEATH ROAD, 5m NORTH WEST FROM CORNER WITH SANDY ROAD / HAMPSHIRE MENTH

front garden of No 34

close boarded fence on perimeter with Sandy Road

eruv pole

plank fence on low brick wall

brick pier

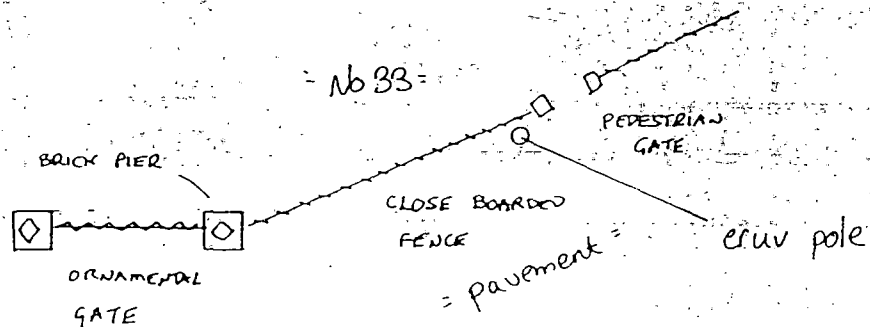
2/ SOUTH POST

= pavement =

AMENDMENT: JANUARY 1993

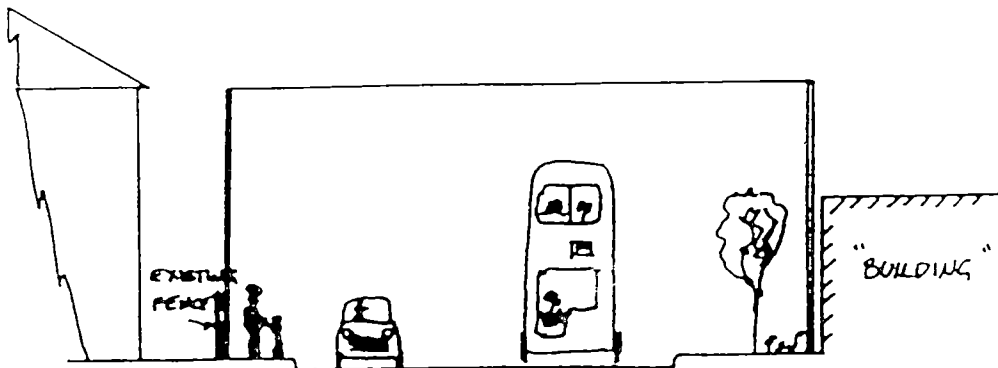
SCHEMATIC SHOWING LOCATION OF SOUTH POLE

AT REAR OF PAVEMENT, ADJACENT TO CLOSE-BOARDED FENCE WHICH FORMS THE FRONT-GARDEN BOUNDARY TO No 33 WEST HEATH ROAD (THE LODGE) JUST SOUTH EAST OF THE PEDESTRIAN GATE.



(view south)

FIG. A.



STANDARD ARRANGEMENT OF POST-AND-WIRE GATEWAY.

IN THIS INSTANCE, THE POSTS WHICH ARE AT THE REAR OF THE PAVEMENT AND VERGE, SPAN BETWEEN AN EXISTING FENCE AND A BUILDING; BOTH OF WHICH FORM THE CONTINUITY TO THE ERUV PERIMETER.

PEDESTRIAN AND VEHICULAR TRAFFIC IS UNIMPEDED.

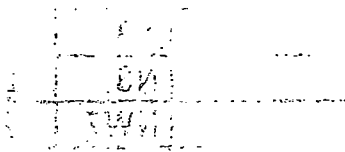
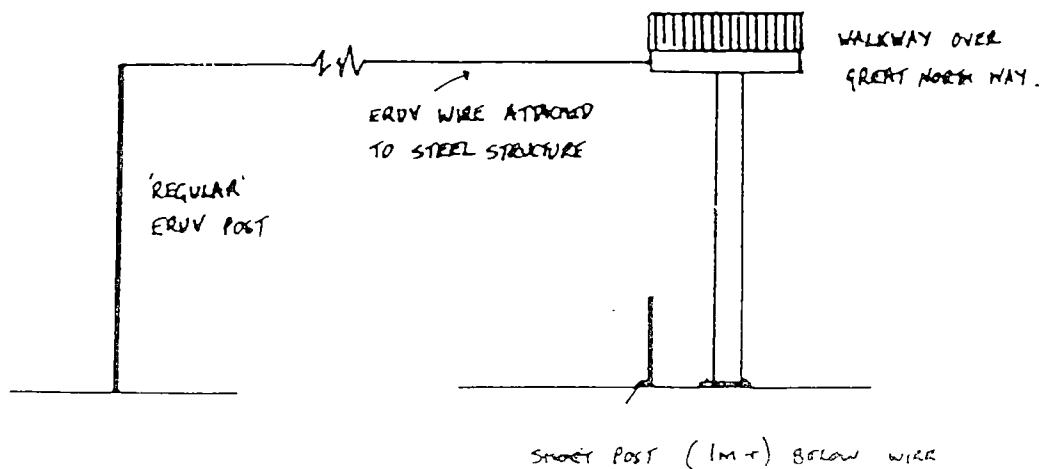


FIG. B.



24A + 24B

TOKEN SECOND POST SITUATED BELOW ERUV WIRE, REMOVING THE NEED FOR A SECOND TALL OR MEDIUM POST.

FORM T.P.I. PART 1

Reference Number (Office Use Only)

Please complete all sections of the form and use
BLOCK LETTERS

1	ADDRESS OF APPLICATION SITE											
VARIOUS LOCATIONS WITHIN THE LONDON BOROUGH OF BARNET AS ITEMISED ON THE TABLE ACCOMPANYING THIS APPLICATION												
2	TYPE OF APPLICATION	Tick appropriate box										
A FULL APPLICATION for new building works and/or change of use of land or buildings ☒ B OUTLINE APPLICATION new building(s) ☐ Indicate which matters are to be determined at this stage, by stating YES or NO in the boxes below <table style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 60%;">Siting</td> <td style="width: 40%; text-align: center;">☐</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Access</td> <td style="text-align: center;">☐</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Design</td> <td style="text-align: center;">☐</td> </tr> <tr> <td>External Appearance</td> <td style="text-align: center;">☐</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Landscaping</td> <td style="text-align: center;">☐</td> </tr> </table> C RETENTION OF BUILDINGS OR WORKS/CONTINUED USE OF LAND undertaken without planning permission ☐ D RETENTION OF BUILDINGS OR WORKS/CONTINUED USE OF LAND undertaken in accordance with a limited period planning permission ☐ Previous Application No. E RETENTION OF BUILDINGS OR WORKS/CONTINUED USE OF LAND/ DEVELOPMENT OF LAND without complying with a condition of a previous planning permission ☐ Previous Application No No of Condition			Siting	☐	Access	☐	Design	☐	External Appearance	☐	Landscaping	☐
Siting	☐											
Access	☐											
Design	☐											
External Appearance	☐											
Landscaping	☐											
3	DATE OF APPLICATION											
19												

4	DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT
INSTALLATION OF STREET FURNITURE COMPRISING GROUPS OF POLES (USUALLY 2) CONNECTED BY THIN HIGH LEVEL WIRE - REVISIONS TO SCHEMES APPROVED ON APPEAL UNDER REF:APP/N5090/A/93/224571 AND BY COUNCIL UNDER REFERENCE ERUV 3 Site area (m²) N/A	
5	FEE State amount enclosed. If you consider that no fee is required state reason why
£ NIL - SEE COVERING LETTER Cheques payable to 'Barnet Corporation'	
6	NAME/ADDRESS OF AGENT If any to whom all correspondence will be sent
FIBBENS FOX ASSOCIATES LTD 31 THE BROADWAY WOODFORD GREEN ESSEX Post Code IG8 OHQ Tel: 0181-505-8138	
7	NAME/ADDRESS OF APPLICANT
UNITED SYNAGOGUE ERUV COMMITTEE 9 WEST HEATH ROAD LONDON Post Code NW3 7UX Tel:	
8	EXISTING USE INFORMATION
i) Main use (if vacant state last known use) PAVEMENTS & VERGES ON BOROUGH'S HIGHWAYS ii) If answer to i) is residential, state how many units, if not state floor area in m² N/A	
9	PROPOSED USE INFORMATION
i) Main use (if vacant state last known use) N/A ii) If answer to i) is residential, state how many units, if not state floor area in m² N/A	

DRAFT

ERUV CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS REVISED NOVEMBER 1997

Map Ref	Location	Postal Code	Poles	Type	Span/m
09	West Heath Road	NW3	2	medium	14
12	North End Road/Way	NW11	2	medium	18
13	Wildwood Road	NW11	6	medium	250
14	Hampstead Lane	N6	2	medium	30
15	Aylmer Road	N2	3	tall	30
16	Bancroft Avenue	N2	2	medium	11
17	Cherry Tree Hill	N2	2	tall	30
18A	East End Road	N2	2	medium	11
18B	Prospect Place (footpath)	N2	2	small	9
19	Church Lane	N2	2	medium	20
20	North Circular Road	N2	3	tall	35
21	Squires Lane	N3	2	medium	9
22	Regents Park Road	N3	2	tall	14
23	Devonshire Road	NW7	2	tall	30
24A	Great North Way (north)	NW4	2	1 tall & 1 small	41
24B	Great North Way (south)	NW4	2	1 medium & 1 small	17
25	Watford Way	NW4	3	tall	55
26	Colindeep Lane	NW4	2	medium	18
27	Station Road	NW4	2	medium	16
28	Park Road	NW4	3	medium	37
29A	Templehof Ave, River Brent	NW4	2	medium	10
29B	Templehof Ave, River Brent	NW4	2	medium	10
33	Stanley Road (footpath)	N2	2	small	9
34	Ashley Lane (footpath)	NW4	2	small	7
35	Great North Way (footpath)	NW4	2	small	25
36	Great North Way, Copthall(footpath)	NW4	2	small	20
38	Finchley Road	NW2	2	medium	25
39	Crewys Road	NW2	2	medium	19

Map Ref	Location	Postal Codes	Poles	Type	Span/m
40	Mortimer Close	NW2	2	medium	19
41a	Hendon Way Pavement	NW2	3	medium	37
42a	<u>Hendon Way/Greenfield Gardens</u> <u>(footpath)</u>	NW2	2	medium	3
43	The Vale	NW2	2	medium	40
44	Malvern Gardens	NW2	2	medium	12
45a	<u>Pennine Drive</u>	NW2	2	medium	18
46	Grampian Gardens	NW2	2	medium	11
47a	<u>Clitterhouse Playing Fields</u> <u>(footpath)</u>	NW2	2	medium	3
48	Rear of "Tesco" (footpath)	NW2	2	medium	3
49	Entrance to "Tesco" etc. Tilling Road	NW2	2	medium	50
50	Tilling Road	NW2	2	medium	26
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			TOTAL	87	1042

NB: Those locations underlined were either not part of the 8/1/97 planning permission granted by the London Borough of Barnet or in the case of Location 20 was the subject of a condition requiring the submission of further details.