

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S DIRECTORATE	
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3, Sutcliffe Close,
London, NW11 6NT.

The Chief Executive,
London Borough of Barnet,
Chief Executive and Town Clerk's Dept.,
Town Hall,
The Burroughs, London, NW4. 4/9-436.

Dear Sir,

We are writing in response to the Council's request for views from Hampstead Garden Suburb's residents about the proposed Eruv.

All the signatories of this letter are long established Suburb residents, many of them Jewish.

Over the years, we have enjoyed a relaxed neighbourly environment, in which the mix of people from very different national, cultural and religious backgrounds has been both harmonious and mutually rewarding. We much enjoy the pleasant surroundings of this Conservation Area, and though we may, individually, be irritated occasionally by some of the constraints placed upon us, we subscribe wholeheartedly to the values of the Trust in monitoring the development of our Conservation Area in the overriding interests of the 'common good'.

For us, the proposed Eruv is most unwelcome. At the very basic, physical level, we simply do not want random poles and wires obtruding in the Conservation Area. We cannot believe that the Trust would, properly, countenance any similar request by any individual resident. But much more fundamentally, we are profoundly concerned about the divisive impact of the overall proposal. We are delighted that individuals and groups can pursue their religious and cultural interests and beliefs freely within the Suburb, but we cannot accept that any individual or group should impose their interests or beliefs upon others by marking out 'territory' which encompasses others with different interests or beliefs. In the case of the Eruv, this is just such an imposition, extraordinarily exotic and arcane, that is bound to cause irritation, if not hostility, amongst a large number of Suburb residents.

We are extremely concerned at the potential consequences. Up to now, there has been a real sense of broadly based goodwill in the Garden Suburb community overall. The Eruv proposal, coming from a small group of Jewish religious fundamentalists, threatens to impact and even destroy this. If implemented, the Eruv could give rise to such an extent of bad feeling as to lead to unthinking and

somewhat indiscriminate racial discord. The possibility of such an outcome fills us with dismay.

There is, of course, a peculiar irony in this whole situation. Many Garden Suburb residents are immigrants or refugees, from both Jewish and non-Jewish stock, who have found this area welcoming and congenial. Surely the last thing we could possibly want to see in the Suburb is the physical delineation of a new 'township' or 'ghetto', with all the overtones of difference and separateness.

Finally, we would urge the Council to sound opinions widely and carefully. The supporters of the Eruv proposal have made strong and loud representations, and that is their democratic right (within the rules of seemly behaviour, of course). However, in a democracy the views of the majority have to be taken into account, and with proper weight. We have little doubt that we represent the views of the majority, but many may well choose to be 'silent', because they are confused and embarrassed by the whole situation as decent and tolerant people. We look to the Council to draw out a balanced and truly representative picture of the views of the Garden Suburb residents overall.

Yours faithfully,

Signed

Name and address

A. L. Jacobs
Mrs Jacobs
Barry Lewis
S. E. Lewis

Miss Spensley
Sally S.B. Spensley

S. E. Lewis

D. Lewis

Anne Lloyd Thomas

D. A. Lloyd Thomas

B. Britton

A. L. JACOBS, 3 SUTCLIFFE CLOSE

JA. EVA JACOBS "

PROF. BARRY LEWIS

MRS EVE LEWIS
5 SUTCLIFFE CLOSE

DR. COLIN SPENSLEY, 46 NORTHWAY

S. S. B. SPENSLEY, 46 NORTHWAY

SALLY LEWIS, 91, NORTHWAY

David Lewis, 91, Northway.

ANNE LLOYD THOMAS, 5 SUTCLIFFE CLOSE

D. A. LLOYD THOMAS 5 SUTCLIFFE CLOSE

MRS BARBARA BRITTON 48 Temple
Foster Lane