

John L Marshall MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON
SW1A 0AA

I very much hope that this proposal, which will be of benefit to parents of young children, the disabled and the elderly, will be adopted. It would be much appreciated by many and would not cause offence to anyone as most of the eruv would follow natural boundaries.

Yours sincerely

John Marshall

MP for Hendon South

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I have been following the work of the United Synagogue Eruv Committee closely over the past months, and I give my full and unequivocal support for the proposed Eruv.

As Chief Rabbi, I have had the opportunity to visit most of the congregations within the designated Eruv area, and have noticed that large numbers of Jews are excluded from becoming full participants within community life, simply because they are unable to cover the distances to synagogue without some form of assistance. To that end the Eruv will be a significant social contribution, enhancing the lives of the elderly and the infirm, mothers with young children, and the handicapped within our community - allowing them to become full and active members of our synagogues.

I am quite sure that the proposed Eruv will enhance still further the close relations between the Jewish community and Barnet, and I look forward to hearing of the results of the proposed Eruv scheme.

Jonathan Sachs



PRESS Briefing

Mon 22nd June 1992

THE UNITED SYNAGOGUE ERUV COMMITTEE
9, West Heath Road London NW3 7UX

What is an Eruv?

A notional perimeter defining a community area.

Without an Eruv, observant Jews may not carry out of doors on the Sabbath, from sundown on Friday to nightfall on Saturday. Our Rabbis, throughout the generations and all over the world, have encouraged the implementation of an Eruv, so that people can function as a community and enjoy Sabbath to the full.

Why is it needed?

The Jewish Sabbath is, by law and tradition, a day which brings the family together in prayer, study and social contact. As the prohibition of carrying extends to pushing prams and wheelchairs, it means that without an Eruv, the handicapped, young families with babies and toddlers cannot even leave the house.

This means that on the very day when a handicapped person or a young family would most wish to visit friends and relatives, to go to Synagogue or enjoy the park, they are trapped at home. If they live in a flat they cannot even go to a neighbour or into the garden.

Where will the Eruv be?

The Eruv is designed to include all the residential areas of Hendon, Golders Green and Hampstead Garden Suburb, together with parts of Finchley, and Child's Hill. It is approximately 6.5 square miles, with a total perimeter of 11 miles (17.5 kilometres). It has been designed to benefit the greatest number of people with the minimum inconvenience to other residents. It is completely within the London Borough of Barnet.

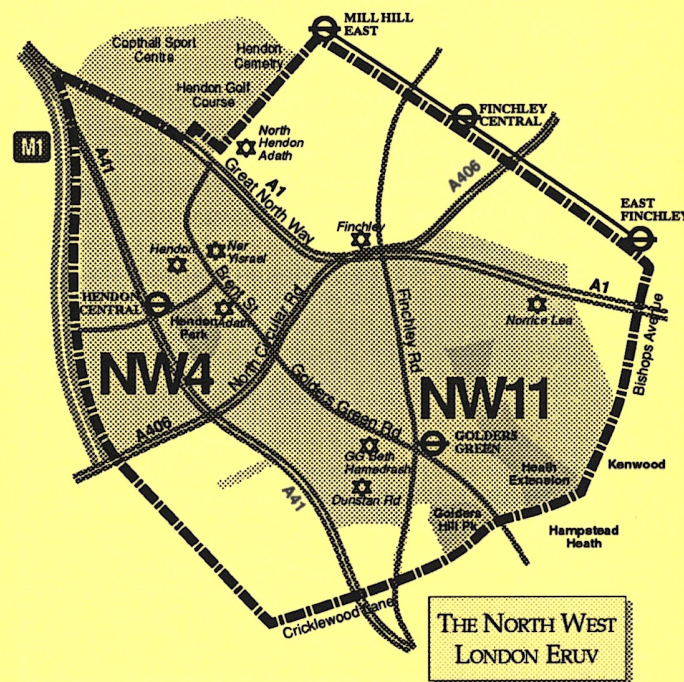
How is the Eruv constructed?

Much like the old City of London or, indeed, local parishes, the Eruv needs to be defined. Natural or existing boundaries, such as rivers, railway lines or motorways are used for over 98% of the Eruv and only exceptionally wide gaps need to be spanned with an unobtrusive filament supported by poles.

Technical details of the proposal have been agreed with the Public Works officials of Barnet Council.

How will it effect the streetscape?

The mono-filament wire used is virtually invisible at the proposed standard height of 21ft. The additional street furniture involved is minimal and has no detrimental impact on the environment. The poles themselves are set at the back of pavement and are less intrusive than existing street furniture.



What about safety?

All safety aspects of the Eruv have been studied and approved by Council officers and the design complies with all Ministry of Transport regulations.

What are the cost implications for Barnet Council?

The staff and resource costs committed by the Council for its feasibility study have been paid for in full by the Eruv Committee.

Who will pay for the Eruv?

All works, maintenance and insurance will be met by the Jewish community.

Are there any precedents, here or abroad?

There are Eruvs in over 30 US cities where the principle of Freedom of Worship is defended by the Supreme Court. They also exist in many European cities, Israel and in Australia.

We think it very appropriate that Barnet, which rightly prides itself on community care issues and which has a large Jewish minority community, will be the first UK Borough to facilitate this forward-looking amenity.

Do all Jewish people want the Eruv?

In London, as in all these other cities, there will be a minority, non-observant group within the Jewish community, that does not feel the need for this facility and, on the other extreme, an ultra-orthodox element who choose not to use it. In Barnet there are over 10,000 people who will benefit significantly from the Eruv and none who will be inconvenienced. There is no cost or risk to other residents.

Community support

The proposal has the full backing of Jewish Care and other major welfare organisations, and of the two local MPs, John Marshall and Hartley Booth.

The movement for an Eruv has been promoted by the four large United Synagogue Community Centres at Hendon, Golders Green, Finchley & Hampstead Garden Suburb as well as by other independent congregations.