

Carmen Lichi

YELLOW paint markings on roads and houses look set to signal the death knell for a 10-year campaign to halt construction of London's first eruv.

Barnet Council workers are marking out the six-and-a-half square mile religious boundary on roads in Child's Hill, Golders Green and Hampstead Garden Suburb in preparation for its installation in the coming weeks.

Roads including Mortimer Close, Crewys Road, Finchley Road, Malvern Gardens, Pennine Lane, The Vale and Hendon Way will form the perimeter, marked by 87 poles strung with fishing wire, which would allow thousands of observant Jews to take part in activities usually banned on the Sabbath.

Speculation that the eruv is due to be installed was fuelled by a planning application from the United Eruv Synagogue Committee (UESC) seeking the council's agreement over the colour of the poles and the type of paint used.

The council has already granted planning permission for the boundary but a Barnet spokeswoman said the detailed application for "sage green" poles marked the last hurdle before erecting the eruv.

"Work will start with a date yet to be arranged," she said.

"Contractors are being consulted at the moment and once some finer points, including the colour of the poles and the thickness of the wire, are agreed, the eruv can go ahead."

But opponents are furious they have not been consulted over the boundary markings.

# Eruv is just weeks away

## Only colour of poles to be agreed

Lorna Noble, a member of the Eruv Boundary Opponents Group who lives in Cricklewood Lane, said: "It's disgraceful that we haven't even been consulted. It's part of the in-your-face-and-up-your attitude the council is adopting towards putting the poles up."

"I spoke to the daughter of a family whose home is going to be right next to one of the poles in Crewys Road."

"She said she wanted to stage a sit-in to stop the council putting the poles up and I am tempted to join her."

"If the markings are put where they are intended, I doubt whether the inhabitants of that house will even be able to open their window."

Elizabeth Segall, also a member of the opponents' group, added: "We are concerned for the cost to the public of all the work."

"The council is putting down these markers on the road without consulting people, but who is paying for all of this?"

Ms Segall also hit out at the council for failing to consult over the change of location of two

eruv poles on the A1 and M1.

The position of the poles, agreed by the council in December 2000, was changed in March when officers decided they were too dangerous for the busy roads.

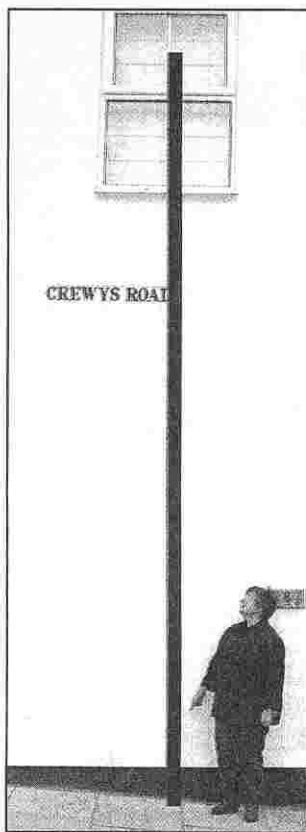
They will now be located in Sunny Hill Park and Great North Way.

A council spokeswoman said that residents hadn't been consulted over the change because they were a "minor departure" from the original proposals.

Hampstead Heath superintendent Simon Lee told the Heath management committee on Monday: "The line is very thin and there could be potential damage to the wire on a regular basis. Barnet has indicated that if this became a problem in the future it will look to see if a thicker wire could be installed along Wildwood Road."

A spokesman for the UESC, which has been pressing for the eruv to be built for more 10 years, said he knew nothing about the boundary markings.

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Height of the eruv pole if installed as proposed in Crewys Road.  
Picture by Nigel Sutton

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