

12 JUNE 92

Jewish border poles 'will spoil Suburb'

PLANS to put up 21-foot poles in Hampstead Garden Suburb to mark the area within which orthodox Jews are allowed to carry anything on the Sabbath will spoil the area, says the Suburb Trust.

According to orthodox Jewish law strict observers are not allowed to carry anything on the Sabbath in a public place — not even, for example, a medicine bottle or handkerchief. The poles and linking wire will mark out and enlarge the private domain or "eruv" in which the ruling does not apply.

The United Synagogue has applied to Barnet Council for planning permission to create an enclosed area of 6.5 square miles with an 11-mile perimeter, taking in Golders Green, parts of the Suburb and Cricklewood and all of Hendon.

Some cities in the US, Israel, Australia, South Africa and Europe already have such arrangements for their Jewish communities.

Trust manager Chris Kellerman has called for public consultation on the proposal and asked the United Synagogue for more information on how many poles it plans to put up and their siting.

"In the Suburb there are numerous open spaces, cul-de-sacs and woods,

Sabbath law defined by boundary

and to circumvent the whole area with the number of poles required could run into hundreds," he said in a letter.

While the perimeter of the eruv would follow some existing boundaries such as railway embankments, motorway barriers and the frontages of houses, the gaps would have to be symbolically indicated. This would be done by erecting two poles and spanning the area in between with wire — a method for which planning consent is required from Barnet.

Mr Kellerman said he did not think the committee had thought its proposals through. "I think people who live in the Suburb ought to be consulted about it. I would suggest that they hold a public meeting. I think we need much more information. Jewish people I have spoken to are very much against it."

He pointed out that the two poles

marking the Woodlands Close eruv, in Golders Green, which was approved by Barnet two years ago, were not well maintained.

Alan Perrin, technical adviser to the United Synagogue's eruv committee, said he thought it was up to Barnet's planning officers to decide who should be informed of the application. He did not think any of the posts would be in the trust area, but said Mr Kellerman could approach Barnet and look at the plans.

In a written plea to councillors, the eruv committee claimed that more than 10,000 people would benefit significantly and that no-one would be inconvenienced. "There will be a minority group within the Jewish community that does not feel the need for this remedy and, on the other extreme, an ultra-orthodox element who choose not to take advantage of it."

Councillors were also told that the wire would be virtually invisible at the proposed height of 21ft and that the poles would be set at the back of pavements and be less intrusive than existing street furniture.

Hendon South MP John Marshall has stated his support for the proposed scheme.

Residents told to complain about bin men

HAMPSTEAD Garden Suburb residents have been urged to "complain and complain" about the standard of the refuse collection service of Tyler Waste Management, Barnet Council's private contractor.

At last week's residents' association meeting, chairwoman Eileen Whelan said there were so many complaints that the RA should produce a standard complaint form.

"The only thing that works is to complain and complain and complain. And if we send in these forms then we can clock up a number of complaints and make Tyler lose the contract," she said.

The RA felt that at present Tyler did not understand the idiosyncracies of the Suburb. Miss Whelan added: "Some sort of work study should be done by Tyler so it can understand the area."

One complaint was that the refuse collectors were inconsistent, and while some teams would take extra rubbish, others refused. The area around Midholm has had particular problems.

But Michael Steward, Tyler's managing director, said that his firm was performing successfully to the contract drawn up by Barnet.

"The residents are complaining because they are putting out extra rubbish which is not going in the bins provid-

ed. If the rubbish was in the bins it would have been picked up," he said.

Mr Steward suggested that the residents go back to Barnet and try and get the specifications of the contract altered if they wanted loose bags of rubbish collected.

● Burglar alarms ringing incessantly in the Suburb, sometimes going on for up to 24 hours, will be subject to greater controls under a Barnet Council initiative, the RA heard.

As from July 1 all new burglar alarms in Barnet will have to be fitted with a 20 minute cut-off device. From January 1, 1993, every alarm will have to have the device and the key-holder's name will have to be registered with the police.

The police will also be given powers to break in to houses where alarms ring for longer than two minutes.

● Dark green wastebins rather than the present bright yellow ones are to be installed in the Suburb on a trial basis. The RA awaits the comments of residents.

● A suggestion by a Suburb sculptress that the RA funds the erection of a statue by her in Central Square was met with a lukewarm response at its meeting last week. The life statue was offered for the cost of casting, which was estimated at £1,000 to £5,000.

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