



Councillor on the rack over motives in vote

GARDEN Suburb councillor Frank Davis denied his vote against the eruv was based on his belief it would be divisive and badly timed.

John Steel QC tackled Mr Davis under cross-examination on his motives in a series of occasionally short-tempered exchanges.

Mr Steel pressed Mr Davis, one of

application purely on planning grounds.

Later, however, he declined to answer when asked if he would continue to be opposed if the inspector allowed the appeal.

Earlier, Mr Davis appeared to land himself in difficulties when he said that while he might be prepared to accept the advice of a solicitor or "other professionals", he would not

say the same of planning officers.

He suggested planning officers represented "a quite different category" of professionals.

Mr Steel had challenged him to explain how he could justify accepting advice from a tree expert who did not know the detailed facts of the application above the advice of planning officers who originally dealt with it.

Inquiry extended

THE public inquiry over-ran its provisional timetable and will not now be completed until next Monday when closing submissions from the council and the eruv committee will be heard.

The inquiry heard evidence from, among others, the Barnet Eruv Objectors Group throughout Monday. Inspector Davis Bushby is expected to publish his report in about two months.

Failure 'will lead to bitter divisions'

LORD Jacobovits warned at the inquiry on Thursday of the potential for further "bitter divisions" within the Jewish community should efforts to establish an eruv fail.

The former Chief Rabbi insisted that if there was another way to ease the problems of carrying on the Sabbath, it would have been suggested. As it was, the prospect of there not being an eruv might lead to greater division.

"If the borough were to refuse permission, it would then create a bitter division because those who are entitled to the benefits of an eruv would feel

disadvantaged," he said. "Of course there are differences of opinion. No civil authority will be able to ensure there will not be any religious conflict."

"I have tried to eliminate divisions and I have not succeeded."

Under-cross examination, he said he did not accept a council was right to take account of any harm a proposal might have in splitting the local community.

In evidence, he said denying those who needed an eruv would amount to a denial of their "religious and civil rights."

Lord Jacobovits, who has lived in Hendon for the last two years, defended his assertion that the

demand for the eruv now was in part due to greater conscientiousness among younger observant Jews.

Edmund Dell, the former Labour peer and Garden Suburb resident, suggested that was not a judgement he was entitled to make and asked if fundamentalism was at the root of the eruv proposal.

"Could it be that the issue was not raised because Jews had a sense of proportion and did not want to fossilise the religion according to Talmudic laws?" he said.

Lord Jacobovits replied it was those who denied the concept of an eruv who were fossilising the religion.

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