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Sabbath setback: David Schreiber, chairman of the United Synagogue Eruv committee in Hendon, north London, with mothers and children outside the local synagogue nursery school, last night saw plans for Britain's first big *eruv* thrown out by Barnet council's planning committee. After a heated debate, members of the committee voted 11-7 against the *eruv*, intended to relieve Orthodox Jews of Sabbath restrictions, which include the

carrying of babies or the pushing of prams outside the home. Mr Schreiber said: "We will now consider an appeal to the secretary of state and we are confident that such an appeal will be dealt with on its planning merits and will succeed." The *eruv* was to have been made of 85 posts carrying thousands of yards of galvanised steel wire, encircling six square miles of north London. Council officers had recommended that it be approved.

Opponents in the two-hour debate last night claimed the *eruv* would endanger bird life, clutter up the streets and be a hazard to blind people. Mr Schreiber accused opponents of running a "scaremongering campaign, fanned by some elements of the press". This had caused "unnecessary anxiety among the public" as well as influencing the sound judgment of councillors.

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