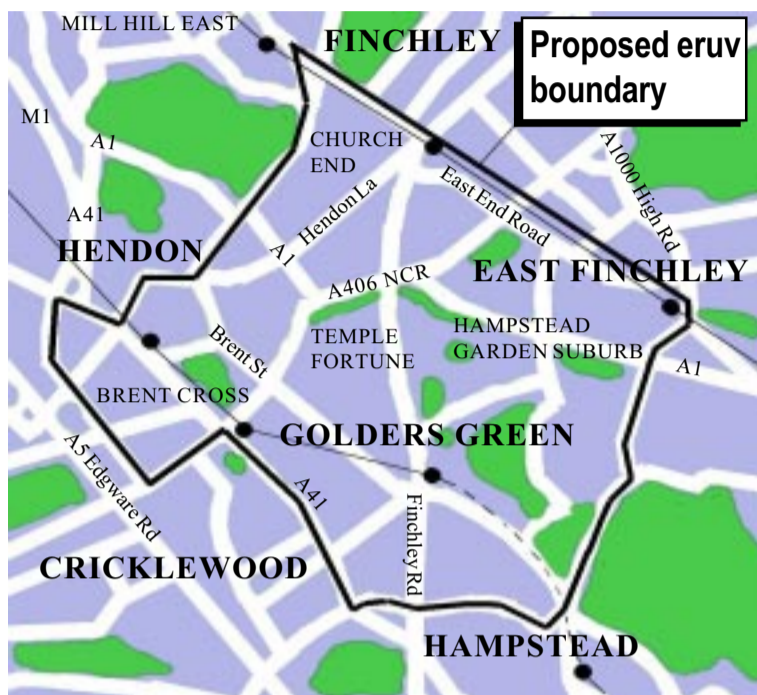




A community newspaper for East Finchley run entirely by volunteers.

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Boundary to free Jews

After more than seven years of argument and opposition the eruv could be only a matter of weeks away. According to Barnet Council, the last few problems, mostly to do with the design of the poles to be used along part of the boundary, have now largely been overcome and the go-ahead is likely to come within the next few weeks.

The eruv, which will include almost all of East Finchley to the west of the High Road as well as Golders Green, Hampstead Garden Suburb and Church End, will be largely marked by existing boundaries like the A1 and the Northern Line. However, Orthodox Jewish religious law requires that there is no break in the boundary so to complete the circle, a total of 88 telegraph poles linked by nylon fishing line will be dotted around the border, mostly spanning road junctions. As the border of the eruv runs along The Bishops Avenue and then follows the Northern Line up to Mill Hill East, the likely local sites for these poles will probably include the junction of the High Road and The Bishops Avenue.

Orthodox Jews are forbidden from "carrying" outside their homes on the Sabbath. This means that they cannot carry keys, push prams or use wheelchairs when

they go outside on a Saturday. The eruv will make the six and a half square miles it covers notionally indoors and ease Sabbath restrictions.

Living in a ghetto

Supporters of the plan argue that few of the 50,000 plus residents who are not Orthodox Jews will even be aware of the eruv's existence. Edward Black of the United Synagogues Eruv Committee described it as benign institution that was not about the creation of a ghetto but about tolerance. By contrast, Alan Jacobs, a secular Jewish member of the Barnet Eruv Objectors' Group feels that the eruv is a way of saying 'this is where Orthodox Jews live' and that their aim is to avoid integration.

Locally it seems unlikely to have much impact on most people, although if the existence of the eruv makes houses within its boundary more desirable it could lead to a further escalation in house prices.

Green light for crossing

By Daphne Chamberlain
Fortis Green should soon have a new pedestrian crossing. At a Council meeting on 20 July, the Finchley and Golders Green Area Environment sub-committee approved funding for a zebra crossing at the junction with Durham Road.

This follows a long-running campaign, led by local residents like Rachel Abedi and Magda Polushko and backed by *THE ARCHER*, which was given impetus this year by the fatal accident to Mrs. Maria Bussandri. Mrs. Bussandri was knocked down by a hit-and-run motorcyclist on this stretch of road - the second accident there in three years.

The cost of life

The planned crossing, estimated cost £12,750, was included in Barnet's annual Traffic Management budget as a priority request which met all criteria for funding, and was supported by local councillors, MP Rudi Vis and East Finchley's Agenda 21 group. Cllr Alison Moore said she had been concerned for a long time about the danger of crossing Fortis Green. Cllr Kathy McGuirk emphasised that everyone was aware of the widespread support for a crossing.

Barring unexpected serious objections, we now have one - though many people would prefer a pelican to a zebra. Some local residents also favour two crossings rather than one. Karen Reich, from Lynmouth Road, told *THE ARCHER*, "Fortis Green is a very long stretch of road. I have two boys, aged 14 and 12, who cross it to catch a bus to school. I see them off every morning with my heart in my mouth." She would like an additional crossing at Fortis Green Avenue.

Baronsmere Road scheme

Another important traffic management scheme for East Finchley was approved at the same meeting.

A "median strip" - a form of island - is planned for the High Road at the junction with Baronsmere Road. This will prevent any traffic, apart from cyclists, from turning right into Baronsmere Road

from the High Road. In addition, there will be no exit from Baronsmere into the High Road.

Rat run

This proposal was also supported by Agenda 21 members Peter Hale and Simon Catting. Simon spoke about the environmental damage to Baronsmere - "a very narrow and very busy road", which was being used as a rat-run. Cars can't pass each other, parked cars are damaged, and pollution levels are high.

Councillor McGuirk thought that the Baronsmere Scheme, by eliminating the rat-run through from Durham Road would help traffic conditions in Fortis Green.

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