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Sent: 07 April 2026 11:24
To: Planning
Subject: Planning Application DC/26/0207:The Hyde Rusper Road Ifield West Sussex
Attachments: DSCN9249.JPG; DSCN9250 - Copy.JPG; DSCN9259.JPG

Categories: Comments Received

Dear Planning Officer

ONLINE APPLICATION for redevelopment of the site to provide up to 7 dwellings, infrastructure, ancillary parking and landscaping with all matters reserved except access

We object to the above application for the following reasons.

In spite of the information provided by Conisbee in their letter of 23 January 2026, and that from Thames Water at Annex G, from bitter experience we are far from convinced that the existing foul water system will be able to cope with the discharge from these additional seven houses. As a point of interest, why has the sewer line from Ifield Golf Course Clubhouse to Thames Water Manhole 271A been omitted from the plans?

BACKGROUND:

For years Thames Water's records showed that the main sewer serving my property and those others on the north side of Rusper Road ran from Ifield Golf Course Clubhouse, under the car park and road then into the field behind the properties (now developed as The Maples). I note that this line is still shown on the sewer map.

We purchased 'Greenacre' in 1994 and over the following years had problems with foul water building up in the expansion chamber in the rear garden. As the cause was thought to be with my drains then I had a commercial contractor clear this as necessary. However on at least two occasions the volume of water was so great that there had to be a more serious problem. Thames Water were contacted and their only access to the sewer was from a manhole at the entrance to IGC car park (this is shown as Thames Water 271A on the application). One such time they had a series of tankers working through the night extracting and removing the waste and on another brought in a huge machine lit up like a fairground - think it was called a 'Decimator' - which had the power and length of hoses to blast along the sewer.

Some 15/16 years ago we had a similar build up of waste water in the expansion chamber and again I arranged a private contractor. Having worked to clear this the engineer was convinced that there was another source of water. Eventually he found a circular manhole cover buried under a flowerbed some 4/5 feet from chamber. We had no idea it was there and it was apparent it had been untouched for many years. Having finally managed to open this, it exposed the main sewer and the cause of the blockage. Following this discovery there was much investigation by Thames Water and the discovery of a similar sewer access at the rear of the garden of 'Ruspers' some seven properties downstream as it were. There were various camera inspections to discover the cause of the problems, major jettings to clear debris along the route and similar. One theory for the blockage was a lack of proper fat traps in IGC kitchens, another that one of the later properties (see below) had been incorrectly fitted to the main sewer and this caused a build up. Having identified the correct route of the sewer and access I was able to show Thames Water that any subsequent flooding was from the sewer and not my responsibility.

Thames Water's records **NOW** show that the existing foul water sewer runs from Ifield Golf Course Clubhouse, under the car park and main road, through my garden and that of the other houses on the north side of Rusper Road. 'Greenacre' and the other original six 'Arts and Crafts' style houses were built in the 1930s. Over time a further six houses have been built

using parts of the original gardens, and Ifield Golf Course Clubhouse has been redeveloped and caters for over 500 members as well as visiting players. There have been no upgrades to this original foul water system and it is common knowledge that Crawley Treatment Plant is working at full capacity.

Life continued until summer 2024 when my rear garden was flooded following heavy rainfall. After various exchanges with Thames Water the conclusion was that misuse of the sewer had caused the blockage (from the description of the items recovered we explained we could not have been responsible) and **'hydraulic overload'** which would eventually subside. The relevant extract from Thames Water's reply follows.

'In the interest of ensuring this matter was addressed, ██████ asked our FOS to review this and confirm if further investigations would be warranted. Our FOS has advised that due to the depth of chambers and pipework, this would not cause any issue. The cause of flooding has been determined as due to hydraulic overload and sewer misuse, with a mass of wipes and sanitary products cleared from the sewer during our attendance of 14 May.'

The FOS advises that downstream of your property, a rising main sewer conveys flows under pressure from a Sewer Pumping Station, and discharges into a larger gravity sewer near Ifield Brook. During heavy rainfall, the flows can cause a back-up, which may result in overground flooding. As such, no follow-on investigations will be required.'

Later in November 2024 we had extensive flooding in the garden and again this was put down to **'hydraulic overload'** caused by heavy rain. This occurred again in January 2025 with similar results. Fast forward to earlier this year when the garden was underwater for several days following heavy rainfall and again the reason is given as **'hydraulic overload'** for which Thames Water has no answer. That this **'back-up'** has the power and force to push open a Thames Water manhole cover which their engineers struggle to lift off shows the force and volume of this which enables it to spread over our garden. Unfortunately due to a camera malfunction we do not have photos of the flooding from earlier this year. However we have attached some from November 2024 which show the scale of the flooding across my garden. There are many others but for reasons unknown the system will not send more than 3 at one time.

Against this background an application has been submitted to build 7 properties in what was the garden of the The Hyde, all of which will be connected to the existing foul water system at the Thames Water Manhole 271A putting further pressure on an original old sewer system which was not built to cope with this level of housing. While in their report Thames Water concluded that the existing sewer system will cope with the foul waste from the new properties, they admit that the system is liable to back up under heavy rainfall and cause overground flooding. Thus nothing has changed since their letter of 2024 quoted above.

I note that in their objections of 19 March 2026 one of the many concerns of Rusper Parish Council relates to drainage.

'Critical information on surface water management is lacking: it is unclear how runoff will be controlled, where water will discharge, and whether existing drainage systems can safely accommodate additional flows without increasing flood risk.'

In their objections of 18 March 2026 Southern Water write:

'Construction of the development shall not commence until details of the proposed means of foul/surface water drainage disposal have been submitted to, and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with Southern Water.'

It is worth stating that while over the past 30 years we have had some problems with waste water leaking into our garden from the expansion chamber, it is only in the last 15 months or so that we have had these four major flooding issues which according to Thames Water are caused by heavy rainfall. While no 'climate' expert, considered opinion supported by well documented changes in UK rainfall intensity is that the weather pattern in the UK is changing and we can expect more of these heavy rainfalls in future. This is borne out locally by organisations such as the Mole River Watch who are increasing concerned with the effects of flooding.

Although Thames Water have stated that the existing foul water system is sufficient to cope with the additional waste from these 7 new houses, from bitter personal experience we would agree that the system is not fit for purpose. As the first house downstream from the proposed connection at Thames Water Manhole 271A we object to the proposed development because of the detrimental effect this will have on our quality of life. This 'hydraulic overload' lasts for several days before gradually draining away, leaving us unable to access our garden, greenhouses or summerhouse, and our dog has to be denied access to the garden as there is no telling what is contained in this waste water. Even more inconvenient and distressing is the fact that the 'back up' caused by this 'hydraulic overload' affects also the internal drains on our property. Until the flooding starts to subside - which can take 2/3 days - we have to be extremely circumspect in the use of toilets, showers, kitchen equipment so as not to compound the problem. Thames Water have no answer to this major issue than basically 'to live with it'. This is totally unacceptable.

Yours aye

[REDACTED]

'Greenacre', Rusper Road, Ifield, Crawley West Sussex RH11 0LN



27.11.2024



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