

Groombridge

(Inset Map No.20)

Introduction

19.14.1 Groombridge is located to the south of the Kent border, about four miles north of Crowborough. The village is primarily residential in character, providing a number of local services and recreational facilities for its residents and the surrounding rural area. It has an estimated population of around 1,050 people.

19.14.2 The Council's aim for Groombridge is to maintain its residential character whilst protecting its rural setting.

Environment

19.14.3 Groombridge has an attractive setting within the undulating landscape of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. There are fine views from the village out into the surrounding countryside and floodplain of the River Grom, and northwards to the historic Bird in Hand Street and Groombridge Place.

19.14.4 Within the village there is a tightly-knit older core around Station Road and Corseley Road, whilst to the south there is a number of more extensive estate developments. Along the southern edge of the village the mature gardens, substantial tree cover, embankments and hedgerows all contribute to the more rural character of Corseley Road and Florance Lane.

19.14.5 To the north of the main village, over the Kent border, the special architectural and historic character around Bird in Hand Street and Groombridge Place has been recognised by its designation as a Conservation Area. Groombridge Place is itself a Grade I Listed Building set amidst a Registered Historic Park and Garden.

Development Boundary

19.14.6 The development boundary seeks to prevent an intensification of development in the rural fringe areas of Groombridge, further ribbon development and an outward encroachment of the village into the surrounding open countryside.

19.14.7 On the western side of the village, Withyham Road provides a well defined boundary, beyond which new development would encroach into open countryside.

19.14.8 Land to the south of the dwellings along Florance Lane slopes in a southerly direction and any development would be an intrusion on the rural fringe of the village. Land to the rear of the dwellings along

Corseley Road has been excluded from the development boundary in order to prevent inappropriate ribbon and backland development which would be detrimental to the character of the area.

19.14.9 Station Road and the former railway line east of Corseley Road both form well defined boundaries on the eastern side of the village, beyond which development would encroach into open countryside, the exception being Groombridge Station, where new housing development has been completed. For similar reasons the countryside to the south of Station Road and Lealands Close has been excluded from the development boundary.

19.14.10 The ribbon of development westwards along the Withyham Road is excluded from the development boundary to prevent any intensification of development.

19.14.11 The compact nature of the existing housing within the development boundary provides few opportunities for new housing development other than through the redevelopment of existing sites and the conversion of non-residential buildings.

Florance Lane Area

19.14.12 Florance Lane is characterised by essentially large detached dwellings set in spacious grounds with mature tree cover and hedgerows. The majority of the dwellings are set back from the road frontage. Plot sizes vary and a number of the dwellings are open to the road with very little screening, while others have dense high hedges. Most of the side boundaries between properties are formed by hedges, trees and shrubs, which contribute to the more rural character of the area. In order to safeguard the area from development which could be detrimental to its special character, a low density housing policy is therefore proposed.

19.14.13 All proposals for new development and redevelopment within Florance Lane will be expected to have regard to its particular character, and development which would be detrimental to its character will be resisted. Since the individual characteristics of each site and the merits of each scheme will be of fundamental importance when determining planning applications, it is not considered appropriate to set down specific plot standards.

VB14 Within the Florance Lane housing policy area, as defined on the Proposals Map, the established character will be protected and

proposals which adversely affect that character will not be permitted. Planning applications for new residential development on sites within the policy area will be determined with reference to the following criteria:

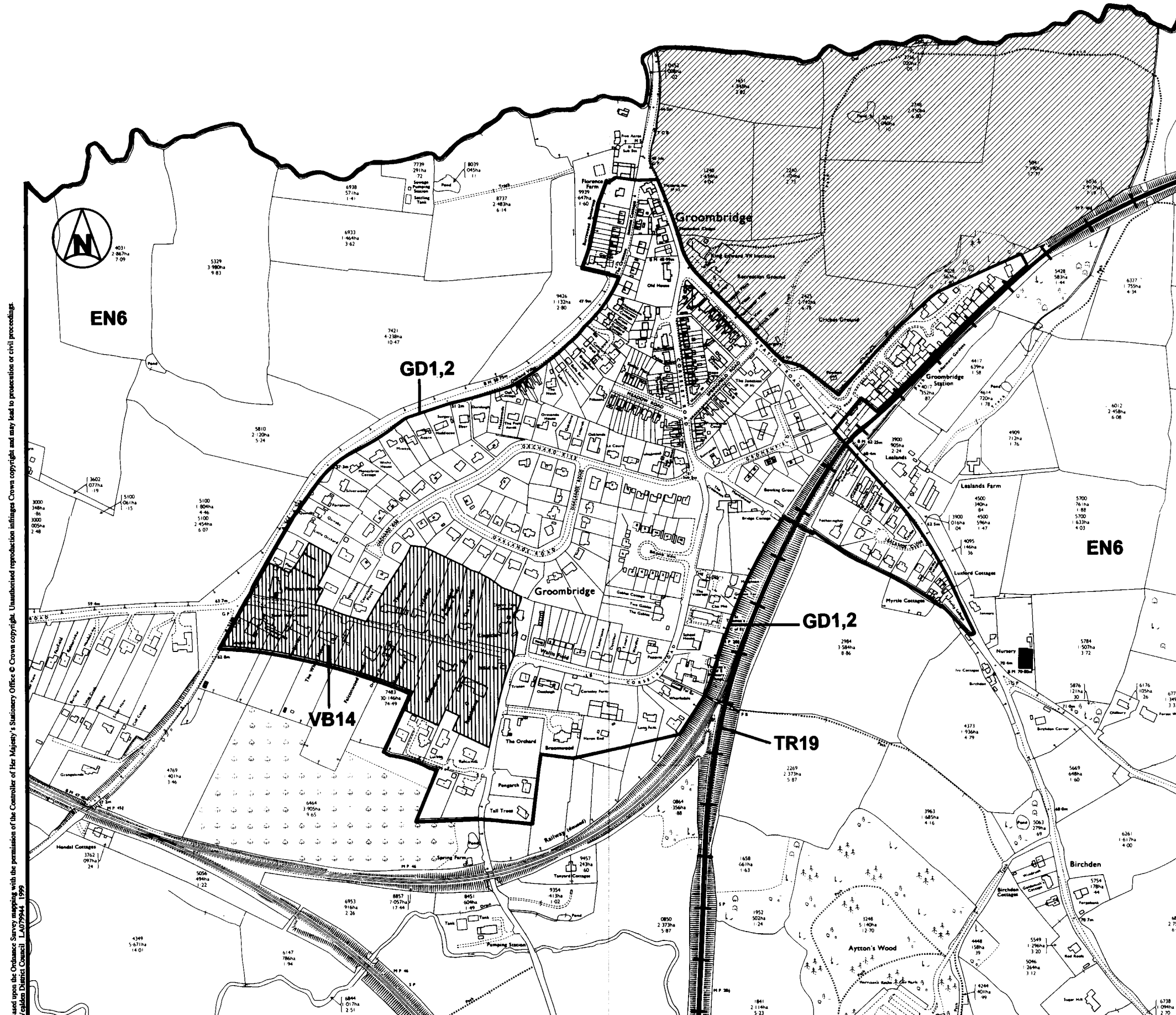
(1) the form, scale, site coverage and siting of the proposed development should reflect the character of the adjoining buildings and the spaces around them, existing building lines and characteristic frontage widths;

(2) landscaping should remain a dominant element of any scheme in accordance with the spacious low density character of the area. The proposed development should not result in the loss of trees, shrubs, hedges or other features which contribute to that character.

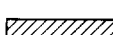
19.14.14 The Tunbridge Wells and Eridge Railway Preservation Society is in the process of establishing a private railway, known as the Spa Valley Line, between the Tunbridge Wells West and Eridge Stations. This currently provides a steam and diesel tourist service and will eventually result in the reinstatement of a limited public transport service. The Council supports the Preservation Society in its efforts to reinstate the use of the line, as discussed in Chapter 9.

19.14.15 The gardens at Groombridge Place were opened to the public for the first time in 1993, thereby providing a major tourism attraction adjoining the village.

Inset Map No. 20 Groombridge



KEY

-  Inset Map boundary
-  Development boundary
-  Housing Policy Area
-  Safeguarded route of former Eridge to Tunbridge Wells railway
-  Historic Park and Garden

The whole of this Inset Map is within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Plan wide policies are listed on the main Proposals Map.



Proposals Map

0 100 200 metres

1:5000