4.20 Landscape Setting of Groombridge

Settlement Profile

4.20.1 Groombridge is situated in the north of Wealden District, just to the south of the Kent border. The village is situated on the B2188, within the High Weald AONB, four miles to the north of Crowborough and four and a half miles to the southwest of Tunbridge Wells.

4.20.2 The small linear settlement is predominantly residential with some local services including a Post Office, convenience store and pub, which have mostly developed to the south east of the B2188.

Landscape Character

4.20.3 The landscape surrounding the settlement falls within the following County Landscape Character Area(s):

- Upper Medway (1) – see Section 4.3 for details

4.20.4 At the more local scale, the landscape surrounding the settlement includes two river valleys, one to the north of the village and another to the south, with a large area of woodland to the east, associated with a patchwork of small to medium scale fields.

4.20.5 The key features and characteristics of the landscape around Groombridge are illustrated on Figure 4.15 and summarised below:

- **Remnant Historic Landscapes**: A predominantly ancient landscape comprised of a patchwork of regular and irregular piecemeal enclosure, cohesive and aggregate assarts, coaxial fields and Ancient Woodland. To the north east of the main settlement lies Groombridge Place, a registered 19th century park and garden with 17th century walled gardens and moated house.

- **Significant Views/Key Ridgelines**: The high ridge to the north is distinctive with its row of tall trees forming a key landscape feature. There are many views to tree covered ridges throughout this landscape, especially looking south from the north ridge and from the Hendel Farm area looking north.

- **Culturally Important Landmarks**: Groombridge Place to the north is a moated historical manor house with extensive gardens. Arthur Conan Doyle wrote Sherlock Holmes stories from here, which results in strong cultural associations. Oast houses are key recognisable landscape features which can be seen from the ridges to the north.

- **Urban Edges**: The edges of this settlement are all sensitive as a result of mature vegetation.

- **Watercourses/Waterbodies**: The River Groom traverses east-west to the north of the settlement, its willow and alder lined banks can be seen from a distance.

- **Footpaths/Bridleways**: Forest Way - a 10 mile recreational route/country park on an old railway line - is crossed by the Sussex Border Path; and several other footpaths join the settlement to its landscape setting to the south of the village.

4.20.6 Areas of distinctive landscape that have been identified around the settlement are shown on Figure 4.15 as 'Landscape Setting Areas'. The distinctive characteristics that define each Landscape Setting Area are highlighted within the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Landscape Setting Area</th>
<th>Distinctive Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1                      | The river valley dominates the centre of the area and is lined with a medium-scale patchwork of predominantly pastoral fields.  
Groombridge Place historic parkland is a key feature in the east, with linear areas of Ancient Woodland which provide a sense of enclosure. |
| 2                      | A meandering river corridor, which is lined with a patchwork of pastoral fields and a network of mature hedgerows. |
| 3                      | Small-scale fields with a strong landscape structure in the north  
A large area of Ancient Woodland in the south. |
Landscape Setting Areas

Landscape Sensitivity (n/b see Methodology):
- Very High
- High
- Moderate
- Low
- Very Low

Landscape Features and Characteristics:
- Remnant Historic Landscape - Historic
- Remnant Historic Landscape - Ancient
- Culturally Important Landmarks
- Landscape Detractors
- Sensitive Urban Edge
- Prominent Urban Edge
- Watercourses/Waterbodies
- Significant Views
- Key Ridgelines
- Footpaths/Bridleways

Conservation Designations:
- Conservation Areas
- Listed Buildings
- Locally Listed Buildings
- Historic Parks and Gardens
- Scheduled Monuments
- Statutory Wildlife Designations/Local Wildlife Sites
- Ancient Woodlands
- Tree Preservation Orders
- South Downs National Park
- High Weald
- Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Figure 4.15
Landcape Setting of Groombridge
### Landscape Sensitivity

4.20.7 The inherent Landscape Sensitivity of each Landscape Setting Area, evaluated in line with the methodology set out within Section 2.4, is shown in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Landscape Setting Area</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Distinctiveness</td>
<td>Unique/rare</td>
<td>Distinct</td>
<td>Distinct</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuity</td>
<td>Recent</td>
<td>Ancient</td>
<td>Historic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strength of Place</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visibility</td>
<td>Apparent</td>
<td>Apparent</td>
<td>Apparent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tree Cover</td>
<td>Intermittent</td>
<td>Intermittent</td>
<td>Enclosed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visibility</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Landscape Value

4.20.8 The inherent Landscape Value of each Landscape Setting Area, evaluated in line with the methodology set out within Section 2.4, is shown in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Landscape Setting Area</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Landscape Value</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Landscape Capacity

4.20.9 The indicative Landscape Capacity of each Landscape Setting Area to accommodate development, evaluated in line with the methodology set out within Section 2.4, is shown in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Landscape Setting Area</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Landscape Sensitivity</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscape Value</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscape Capacity</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>High</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.20.10 **Landscape Setting Area 1** is considered to have Moderate Landscape Capacity as a result of its Moderate Landscape Sensitivity and High Landscape Value. This area is situated within the High Weald AONB and is therefore considered to have High Landscape Value. The pattern of rare landscape features, wooded spurs and a rich and varied pattern of hedges and woods contribute to moderate Landscape Sensitivity.

4.20.11 **Landscape Setting Area 2** is considered to have Moderate Landscape Capacity as a result of its High Landscape Sensitivity and Moderate Landscape Value. Views to the village from the outer ridges contribute to a strong strength of place and there is a moderately intact landscape structure.

4.20.12 **Landscape Setting Area 3** is considered to have Moderate Landscape Capacity as a result of its Low Landscape Sensitivity and Moderate overall Landscape Value. Landscape Sensitivity is considered to be low as a result of the lack of historic continuity within this recent landscape.
Contribution to Landscape Setting of Settlement

4.20.13 There is currently no Conservation Area within Groombridge.

4.20.14 The Contribution of each Landscape Setting Area, evaluated in line with the methodology set out within Section 2.4, is shown in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Landscape Setting Area 1</th>
<th>Landscape Setting Area 2</th>
<th>Landscape Setting Area 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contribution to Landscape Setting</td>
<td>Major</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Major</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.20.15 Landscape Setting Area 1 is considered to make a Major contribution to the Landscape Setting of the settlement as a result of the strong inter-visibility with historic buildings within the historic core. The area has a strong strength of place, resulting from the presence of the river corridor and Groombridge Place historic parkland.

4.20.16 Landscape Setting Area 2 is considered to make a Moderate contribution to the Landscape Setting of the settlement due to its distinctiveness and historic landscape features such as Ancient Woodland and the River Grom floodplain. The deep wooded lanes and clumps of mature trees contribute to the strength of place and character. The water cleaning station to the south is in a historic building nestled in the trees. Long views across the valley to the opposite wooded ridge with foregrounds of open, irregular shaped, mature hedge lined fields are also characteristic.

4.20.17 Landscape Setting Area 3 is considered to make a Major contribution to the landscape setting of the settlement as a result of strong inter-visibility with the historic core and the presence of large areas of Ancient Woodland which are visible within views eastwards from the village.