

RUGBY BOROUGH COUNCIL

**OLD BROWNSOVER
CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL**





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INTRODUCTION

Brownsover is a hamlet some mile and a half to the north of Rugby. The Conservation Area runs parallel to the A426 Leicester Road on the eastern side and incorporates Brownsover Hall and a small number of houses to the south together with St Michael's Church. Undeveloped land to the east and around the hall is included within the Conservation Area.

The area was designated a Conservation Area in July 1992 and the designation covers all the buildings within the hamlet but excludes the recent residential development of Monarch Close.

Conservation Areas were introduced by the Civic Amenities Act in 1967 and they are defined by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as an 'area of special architectural or historic interest, the character of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'. Section 69 of the act places a duty on the Local Authority to review its Conservation Areas from time to time and section 71 to formulate and publish proposals for their preservation and enhancement. Brownsover is one of 19 conservation areas in the Borough.

Local authorities have a duty to identify, designate, preserve and enhance Conservation Areas within their administrative areas. The aim in these areas is to preserve or enhance not merely individual buildings but all those elements, which may include minor buildings, trees, open spaces, walls, paving, materials, etc., which together make up a familiar and attractive local scene. The relationship between buildings and spaces within Conservation Areas creates a unique environment which provides a sense of identity and amenity for residents, and an irreplaceable part of our local, regional and national heritage.

The positive identification of designated areas helps focus attention on its qualities and encourages a sensitive approach to any proposed development. The Local Planning Authority will exercise particular care to ensure that change, where it occurs, will preserve or enhance the character of an area. The designation of a Conservation Area ensures that quality of design and context is a consideration when determining planning application.

There are different planning controls in Conservation Areas and anyone proposing development should seek advice from Rugby Borough Planning Authority. The main effects of designation area are:

- all planning applications for development which would affect the character of a Conservation Area must be advertised in the local press and site notices posted;
- the construction of an extension over 50 cubic metres or by more than 10% of the volume of the original dwelling, whichever is the greater (or in any case by more than 115 cubic metres), will require planning permission;
- Conservation Area Consent is often required for the demolition of buildings, or significant parts of buildings;
- Planning Permission is required for some alterations to dwellings including the installation of dormer windows and cladding;
- satellite dishes or antennae on chimneys, front walls or front roof slopes will require Planning Permission;

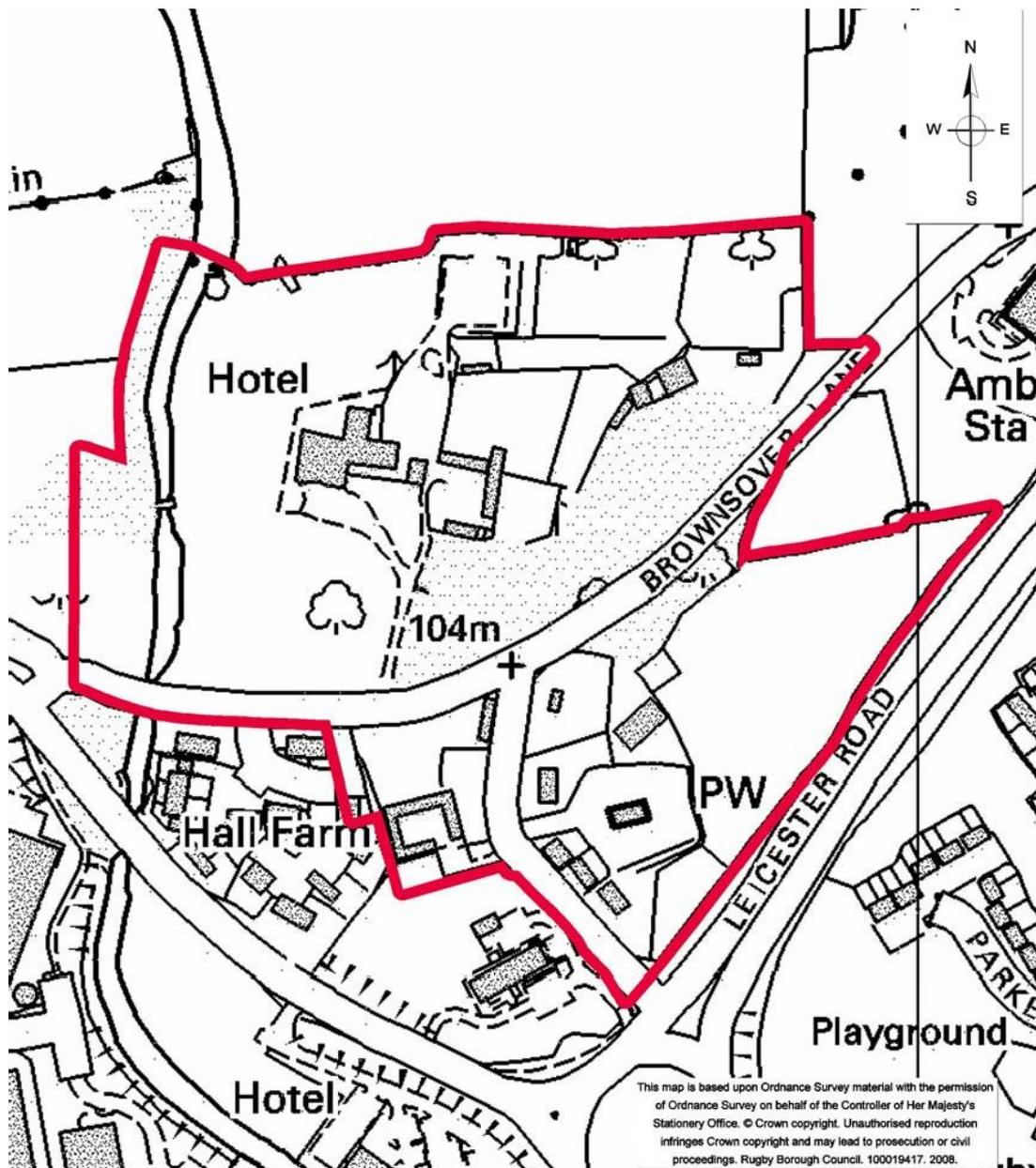
- Conservation Area designation also protects trees within the boundary of the Conservation Area by requiring owners to give the Local Planning Authority six weeks notice of their intention to carry out any tree work on trees where the trunk is 75mm or over in diameter measured at 1.5 metres from the ground.

This document is an appraisal of Brownsover Conservation Area. It is based on guidelines issued by English Heritage, the Government's advisor on the historic built environment and has been prepared by Rugby Borough Council. The principal objectives of the appraisal are to:

- define and record the special interest of Brownsover Conservation Area to ensure there is full understanding of what is worthy of preservation;
- increase public awareness of the aims and objectives of conservation area designation and stimulate their involvement in the protection of its character and to inform decisions made by Rugby Borough Council and local residents;
- reassess current boundaries to make certain that they accurately reflect what is now perceived to be of special interest and that they are readable on the ground;
- assess the action that may be necessary to safeguard this special interest and put forward proposals for their enhancement.

It is however, not intended to be wholly comprehensive in its content and failure to mention any particular building, feature or space should not be assumed to imply that they are of no interest. This assessment should be read in conjunction with the Rugby Borough Local Plan 2006 and national policy guidance, particularly Planning Policy Guidance Note 15: Planning and the Historic Environment. These documents provide more detailed information on local and national policy relating to Conservation Areas.

MAP OF CONSERVATION AREA DESIGNATION FROM LOCAL PLAN - MAP 1



LOCATION AND CONTEXT

Brownsover is situated to the north of Rugby Borough and is set on rising land near to the confluence of the River Avon and River Swift. It is separated from the more recent development in Brownsover by the Leicester Road dual carriageway. The area is characterised by mature landscaping and from outside the Conservation Area only glimpses of buildings are possible. This rural character is maintained within the Conservation Area.

The hamlet historically comprised the hall, church and a small number of other buildings including a public house and farmstead. Limited modern development in close proximity to the earlier buildings has taken place but the Hall's grounds remain extensive and undeveloped. Now the cluster of old and new houses are within an established woodland

landscape and the Conservation Area retains is tranquillity despite traffic on adjacent roads, the neighbouring New Brownsover and the nearby industrial estates.

The land and buildings within the Conservation Area are generally of good quality and are well maintained. There is however potential for development pressure to alter existing buildings, remove important trees and landscaping, etc. which would adversely affect the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

GENERAL CHARACTER AND FORM

Brownsover is a low density settlement comprising a rural appearance with large areas of green space. The hamlet is set in an agricultural landscape and this is reflected in the appearance and character of the Conservation Area. The hamlet comprises a single road, Brownsover Lane, which runs east to west and from the centre of the hamlet an additional arm goes to the south. The area is bordered to the west by the canal which runs north to south. Therefore although the area is small the historic importance of transport on the settlement is evident.

The dominant building is Brownsover Hall to the north of Brownsover Lane, a Victorian Gothic mansion, which is a remodelling of an earlier hall, set in extensive and attractive grounds. To the north, south and west of the hall are large open spaces with mature trees and landscaping bordered by the canal along the western boundary. To the east of the hall are a group of attractive outbuildings associated with the hall together with a walled garden. Further east is an area of woodland which although now in different ownership to the hall, contains the remains of a number of outbuildings associated with the running of the estate in the nineteenth century together with evidence of an orchard.

To the south of Brownsover Lane is the main cluster of buildings within the Conservation Area. These are mixed in character with St Michaels Church, an eighteenth century farmstead, Lawrence Sherrif Cottage with origins from the sixteenth century, and limited modern residential development. These buildings, although different in form and character, are bound together by the shared character of being set back from the highway and situated in a landscape dominated setting. Only Star Farm, formerly the inn, is set abutting the highway. To the east of these buildings are fields bordered by mature trees and landscaping which strengthens the rural and undeveloped character of the area.

Mature landscaping dominates and, on the approach to the hamlet along Brownsover Lane from the east and west, the landscaping, topography and shape of the road limits long views. Buildings emerge gradually into view set within a soft landscape. Views out of the Conservation Area into the wider environment area also limited by the dominant landscaping although occasional long distance views of the neighbouring industrial development can occasionally be seen.

PHOTO 2 – TYPICAL VIEWS OF MATURE LANDSCAPE



LANDSCAPE SETTING AND OPEN AND GREEN SPACES WITHIN THE CONSERVATION AREA

Open space is crucial to the character of the Conservation Area. The settlement is surrounded by open countryside and the approach from east and west along Brownsover Lane is dominated by gently undulating topography. This countryside is also visible from within the built up part of the Conservation Area with views out into the surrounding land from Brownsover Hall, the church and other buildings along the southern section of Brownsover Lane. Yet due to the plethora of landscaping there are many occasions within the Conservation Area where no views out are possible and this leads to a strong sense of enclosure.

The most important open space is that surrounding Brownsover Hall. The gardens to all sides of the hall provide it with an impressive setting that allows the building to sit as landmark. The woodland to the east of the hall also adds to its context and a walk through these grounds allows the hall and its outbuildings to gradually come into view.

Other open and green spaces may not be as dramatic or of such a size as that around Brownsover Hall, however, there are a number of other important spaces. The fields to the southern side of Brownsover Lane prior to Woodlands provides an attractive rural fringe to the Conservation Area and places the settlement within its rural context. Importantly, the mature trees along the south eastern boundary prevent any views beyond the Conservation Area boundary and maintain the sense of enclosure within the designation.

St Michael's Church is set in relatively large open space with a grassed approach from the highway and a small cemetery on three sides. The landscaping along each boundary provides a degree of seclusion whilst allowing glimpses beyond.

Another important open space within the Conservation Area is the steep banking on the southern side of Brownsover Lane leading up to Hall Farm. This area provides a view of the scale of Hall Farm together with its outbuildings and also of the significant differences in land levels within the area.

Landscape Setting

The settlement can be accessed by two roads, Leicester Road from the east and from Brownsover Road to the west. Along the Leicester Road the Conservation Area is barely visible as the mature landscaping (which comprises mixed deciduous, hawthorn, limes etc. along the eastern boundary) acts as a buffer between the hamlet and the dual carriageway. When approaching the hamlet from Brownsover Road to the west, glimpses through the landscaping over the canal are possible but most views are blocked.

Further along the main part of Brownsover Lane the dominant feature is the trees and hedges that border the road. To the north of Brownsover Lane the trees are predominantly a mix of oak, yew and ash, with limes and sycamores dominating on the south. These trees frame the view both east and west and allow only occasional views out into the wider countryside.

PHOTO 3 - LANDSCAPED SETTING OF BROWNSOVER HALL



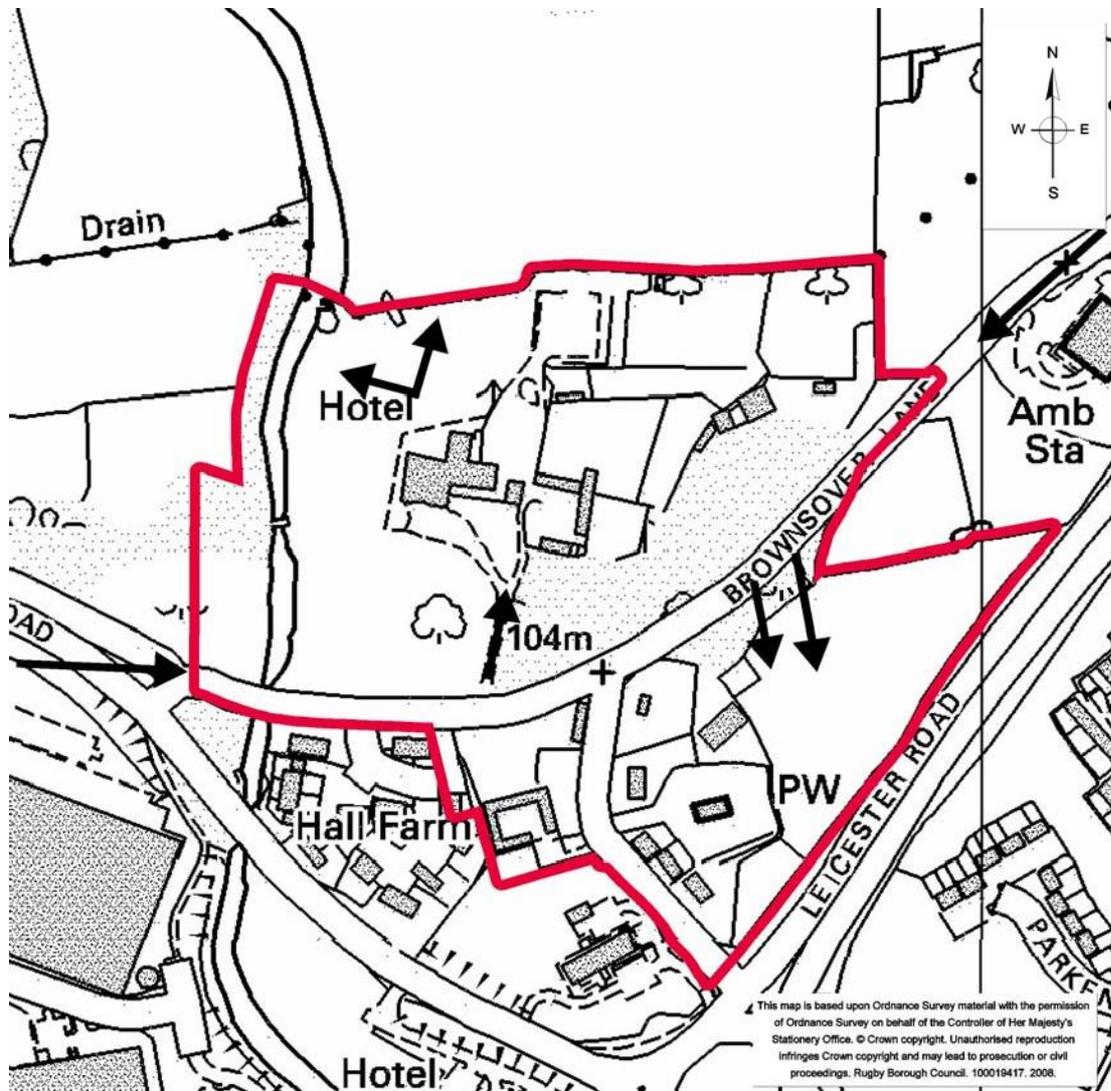
The field to the south east of Brownsover Lane is also well treed with trees along the boundary with Leicester Road and within the fields. This provides a distinctive strong rural setting which is continued into the settlement.

The other major area of woodland is to the east of Brownsover Hall which contains a mixture of species including yew, pine, evergreens and limes. The hall grounds also contain many fine specimens including pines, wellingtonia and limes. These create a more parkland appearance.

Where buildings are present in the Conservation Area the landscaped theme continues with the majority of the buildings being partially screened from view by planting. Some buildings, such as Hall Farm are not open to view due to the holly hedging on the boundary.

The landscaped character runs the length of the main east to west section of Brownsover Lane with only occasional breaks to accommodate fencing or retaining walls. The section of Brownsover Lane which runs to the south continues further soft landscaping especially on its western side until it joins Leicester Road. Only along the eastern side of the road in front of the dwellings, including The Cottage and Holly Tree Cottage does the character take on a less landscaped appearance.

MAP TO ILLUSTRATE KEY VIEWS INTO THE SETTLEMENT FROM THE SURROUNDING LANDSCAPE, AND VIEWS FROM INSIDE THE SETTLEMENT LOOKING OUT - MAP 2



HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Brownsover was an established settlement at the time of the Domesday Book with evidence suggesting human activity prior to that time from the middle of the Bronze Age to pre-Roman times. Much of the information relating to the history of Brownsover comes from manorial records and the land dealings of the rich. By Victorian times the settlement was in decline as Rugby began to grow in importance and the hamlet became part of Rugby in the last century.

In the handbook 'Rugby and Neighbourhood' published in 1926 it was stated that the hamlet "years ago" constituted hall, church, an inn, farmhouse and a dozen cottages. The Inn, known as The Old Star, closed in 1890 and became a private house. Reference is also made to The Parsonage House (now known as Lawrence Sheriff Cottage), widely believed to be the birthplace of Lawrence Sheriff. He possibly contributed significantly to the church and environs of the hamlet.

The oldest building, St Michael and All Angels, originated from the thirteenth century. This was an Anglican parish church and was founded as a chapel of ease. The church was almost entirely rebuilt by Sir George Gilbert Scott in 1876 although older elements remain. Prior to the reformation brick buttresses and a west porch were added, otherwise the structure remained the same for many years and there are some remains from the thirteenth century. The church has been in the care of the Churches Conservation Trust since 1987.

Lawrence Sheriff Cottage has also been much altered but has origins from the sixteenth century. Other historically important buildings include Hall Farm which dates from the eighteenth century and The Cottage, which was formerly the Old Star Inn.

PHOTO 4 - OLD STAR INN



The dominant historical building in the Conservation Area is however Brownsover Hall. The house was built on foundations of an earlier fourteenth century farmhouse owned by the Boughton family of Lawford Hall and the present house was remodelled and extended by Sir George Gilbert Scott in the mid nineteenth century. This Victorian Gothic building with red brick and geometric blue brick diaper work includes bay and dormer windows, a tower and many other gothic motifs. Prior to this remodelling Boughton Leigh added a park of some 30 acres to the western side of the farmhouse and developed new gardens in 1836. In order that the new gardens could be built to the front of the house the turnpike road from Rugby to Lutterworth was diverted

Within the grounds of the hall are a number of important outbuildings including the Stable Block and Coachman's Cottage together with the walled garden. The remains of other more utilitarian outbuildings exist within the woodland to the east of the hall. The hall is perhaps most famous for the presence in 1939 of Sir Frank Whittle, the inventor of the jet engine, who worked on his designs in the hall. The hall is now a hotel and conference centre.

Within the hamlet there has been relatively little development since the Victorian period with only limited infill development, the majority of which is relatively low key in architectural terms.

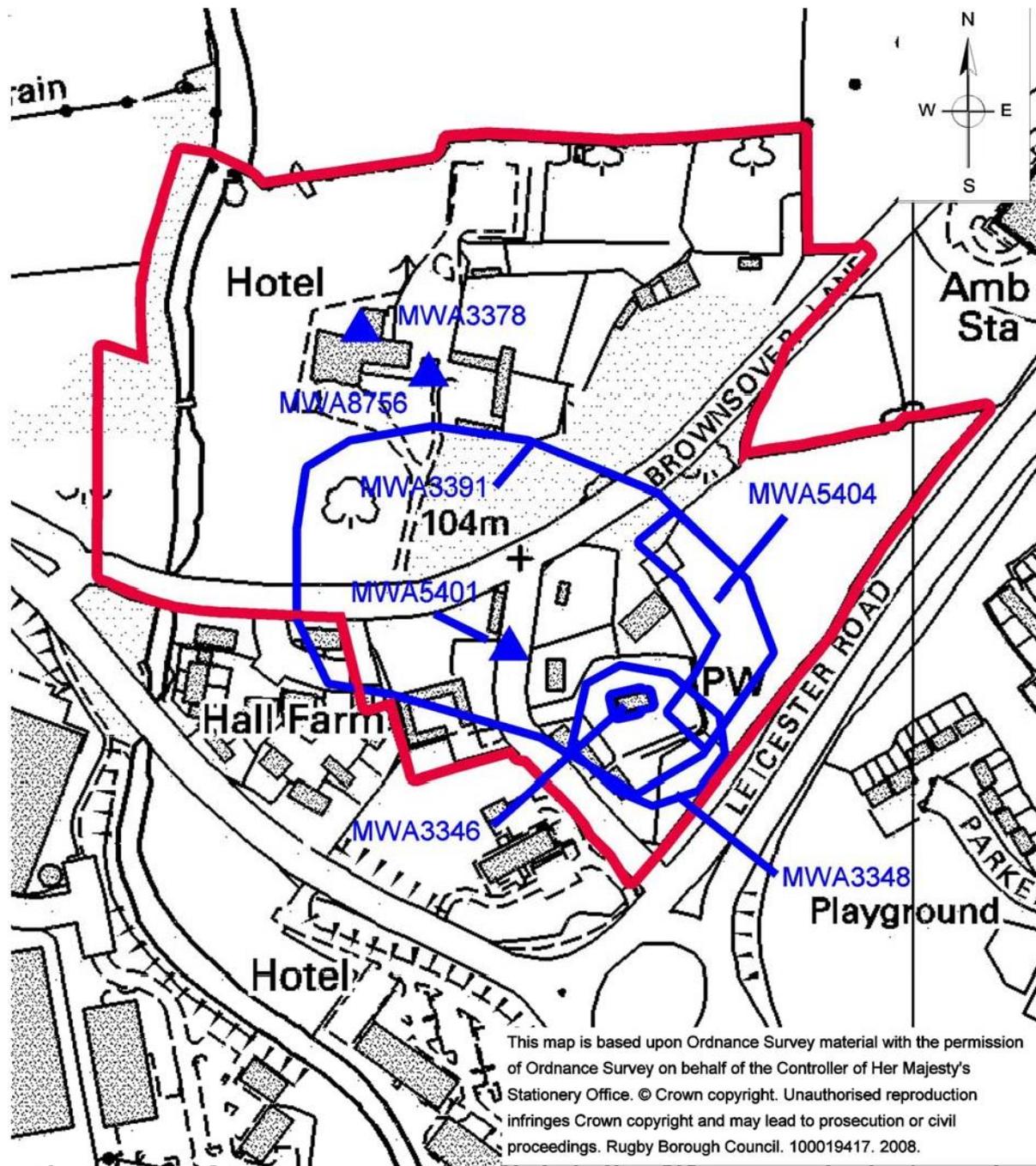
Key to the history of Brownsover is its links to major families such as the Boughton Leigh family and to its historic links to transport. The family oversaw the remodelling of Brownsover Hall and the church and the influence is evident in the monuments within the cemetery.

In terms of transport to the west of Brownsover, the Oxford Canal separates the hamlet from the built up part of Rugby. To the east the A426 separates the Conservation Area from the New Brownsover area. Elements of the former road serving the hall, prior to its realignment by Sir Boughton Leigh, can still be seen and the old bridge that carried the turnpike over the canal remains in situ appearing to be no more than an elaborate garden decoration. The importance in the realignment of the turnpike is that it resulted in the removal of the original tollgate near to the entrance of Brownsover Hall. Evidence that the area was busy is found in the fact that a settlement of such limited size had an inn when there were no footpaths from Clifton or Newton and the hostelry relied mostly on passing trade. It is possible that the inn became the toll house for Lutterworth turnpike before it closed.

The development of canals is important to the history of Brownsover in that the Brownsover arm of the Oxford canal was originally built to carry coal from coal fields north of Rugby to Oxford. The canal reached this area from Longford, Coventry, in the early 1770's. It was built as a contour canal in order to minimise engineering and consequently has a meandering route. The canal follows a contour southwards towards Brownsover, passing though the grounds of the hall and on towards Clifton. The canal was completed in 1790 and after the opening of the Grand Junction goods were carried from London by water to Brownsover Wharf and then by road transport. The importance of the Brownsover arm of the canal reduced when other wharves took traffic away from Brownsover.

In May 1928 the Oxford Canal Company began straightening the tortuous route of the canal and an embankment and aqueduct were constructed to carry the canal over the Swift Valley to the south of Brownsover. The southerly part of the route that ran from the feeder and through the Hall's grounds to the newly straightened canal was maintained and remains navigable.

ARCHAEOLOGY AND SCHEDULED ANCIENT MONUMENTS - MAP 3



3346 – Church of St Michael and All Angels – originally built during the Medieval period. Church largely restored during the Imperial period.

3348 – cinerary or cremation urn dating from the Roman period, burial site was located 200mm south east of Brownsover Hall.

3378 – Brownsover Hall, built during the Imperial period.

3391 – site of several linear earthworks, banks and ditches, few traces of the earthworks now remain but excavations during 1950's found evidence that the features may date to the medieval period, to north of church.

5401 – various finds of medieval date including fragments of pottery and an iron arrowhead, 100 north west of church.

5404 – possible site of a shrunken village of medieval date, north east of church.

8756 – coach house, constructed during the Imperial period.

ARCHITECTURE AND BUILDING MATERIALS

Brownsover has buildings originating from the thirteenth century to the late twentieth century and other than the remodelling and alteration of the hall and its outbuildings in the 1870's, there is no other strong period of building.

The relative affluence of Brownsover together with its proximity to larger settlements such as Rugby has ensured that the vast majority of the building stock is in good order and all buildings are occupied. The quality and historic importance of the hamlet is demonstrated in the high proportion of buildings which are listed, these comprise Brownsover Hall, the Coach House, the Stable Block, the Coachman's Cottage, the Church of St Michael and All Angels and Lawrence Sheriff's House.

The dominating architectural form in the conservation area is Brownsover Hall, a Victorian Gothic development carried out by Sir George Gilbert Scott. The hall is a striking red brick building with slate roof with dormer windows, a tower and a turret with oriel and bay windows, all in the Victorian Gothic style. The architecture is dramatic and is enhanced by the architectural landscape setting. The character is continued with the adjacent outbuildings which have been renovated and extended recently. These retain the Gothic characteristics of red brick and slate with contrasting blue bricks in geometric patterns.

In the remainder of the Conservation Area there is no one defining architectural order. The mixed character and appearance of the buildings reflects the hamlet's limited, slow growth. Lawrence Sheriff Cottage dominates the street scene where Brownsover Lane divides to the south. It comprises white washed plaster panels within the timber frames. The other strong architectural element is Star Farm to the west of Brownsover Lane which is a red brick linear building sited adjacent to the highway. The other characteristic is made up of buildings being set back from the highway, often behind strong landscape planting. Hall Farm has Georgian elements and comprises a dwelling with a storage type section. This links the building and settlement to its rural origins.

However, other than the hall and its associated outbuildings, there is no one strong defining element of materials or architectural form, the common themes instead comprises the rural character and landscape setting.

In terms of fenestration, timber and stone mullion/transom windows dominate in the hall and surrounding outbuildings, a mixture of timber and upvc can be found elsewhere in the Conservation Area.

DETAILED ARCHITECTURAL ASSESSMENT

The prevailing character of the Conservation Area is one of rural tranquillity with mature landscaping dominating and preventing anything other than occasional glimpses of buildings from public access.

On approaching Brownsover from the east off Leicester Road the land level drops significantly along the leafy, narrow country lane. The rural character is reinforced by the informal highway verge with kerb stones only on the southern side of the road. The northern verge is bordered by mature hedgerow with glimpses of fields beyond. In the far distance glimpses of an industrial estate are also just possible beyond the open countryside.

On entering the Conservation Area gently undulating open countryside comes into view comprising grass surrounded by post and wire fencing on the boundary to the south. The mature landscape is a strong feature with a line of mature Hawthorn trees denoting the boundary with Sycamore and Lime trees lining the road running into the hamlet. The land level continues to fall with the field to the south sloping towards Leicester Road.

To the north of Brownsover Lane there is a greater sense of enclosure provided by the trees, which include Yew and Ash and dense woodland beyond. The approach into the developed parts of Brownsover is framed by large mature trees along both sides of the road joining at the centre of the highway. The line of the road which gently bends into the hamlet prevents any view of buildings within the Conservation Area.

The rural character is further enhanced by the absence of street lighting. Although at the junction where Brownsover Lane forks to the south there is some street furniture the prevailing character remains one of buildings slowly emerging into view uncluttered by evidence of development such as lampposts. There are embankments to each side which together with the landscaping confirms the sense of enclosure and highlights the importance of the differing land levels within the Conservation Area.

The first buildings that come into view are perhaps not indicative of the general form and character of the Conservation Area. Both Lawrence Sheriff Cottage and Star Farm are more open to view than the majority of buildings within the designation. Lawrence Sheriff Cottage stands on an elevated level above the highway and Star Farm abuts the highway. This allows both buildings to provide a prominent entrance to the southern arm of Brownsover Lane. The character alters at this point as the area takes on a more developed feel with buildings and the heavily kerbed road and street furniture.

PHOTO 5 - LAWRENCE SHERIFF COTTAGE



Although Lawrence Sheriff Cottage and Star Farm are the buildings which first come into view. Woodlands (a bungalow) is less indicative of the general character of the Conservation Area. Of a relatively modern structure it is set on an elevated position above the highway. The design and siting of the building together with its woodland setting, result in an unobtrusive building which, whilst not traditional, nestles comfortably within the Conservation Area.

Lawrence Sheriff Cottage sits on an elevated plot with a verge to the side and a two metre close boarded fence to the rear. The building has merit and contributes to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The significant facade comprises timber framing with an oak front door and leaded rectangular windows. It is predominantly two storeys with accommodation in the roof space. The building is striking due to its elevated and relatively open setting and its contrasting dark timber frame and white panels.

Adjacent to Lawrence Sheriff Cottage is a 1970's red brick and tile detached dwelling of two storeys and bordered with the highway by a one metre metal fence. The front garden accommodates a number of mature trees which help to partially screen the building from the highway. The railings continue along the southern boundary of the dwelling which forms the boundary with the church.

The rural character is reinforced by the church where the metal entrance gate is adjacent to a hedge. A tree planted within the churchyard obscures the view of the church facade. With the white railings to the north and hedge to the south there is a strong sense of enclosure on

the approach to the church. The grass path leading up to the building strengthens the rural character and with mature trees along the boundaries of the church the countryside character strengthens the dominance of the rural character. The church is small and of simple design comprising a gable facade with darker stone buttresses and a bell above the entrance under a small pitched roof. Its location is unobtrusive.

In the churchyard the land rises as the building is approached, again mirroring the change of levels found elsewhere in the Conservation Area. The mown path around the church allows pedestrian access but the remainder is allowed to grow adding to the sense of naturalness. A number of gravestones are large and prominent and include box graves. The monument to the front of the church also reflects the importance of the Boughton Leigh family to Brownsover.

Views out from the churchyard are limited by the landscaping and the sense of isolation is reinforced by the lack of surrounding development. The most striking characteristic is the significant drop in land levels to the south of the church with the adjacent dwellings being some one storey below the level of the churchyard.

The three dwellings along the eastern side of Brownsover Lane adjacent to the church broadly follow the same front building line, are all set away from the highway with front gardens. The houses are of mixed character but all are generally understated and are bordered by the highway with a mix of walls and soft landscaping. The highway boundary is however more suburban on the eastern side with the western side retaining a soft landscaped character which mirrors the rural character elsewhere in the Conservation Area.

To the east of Brownsover Lane is Hall Farm, a whitewashed brick dwelling which has Georgian origins. The building was at some point a farmhouse and the architecture reflects the settlements economic base. There is an impressive group of agricultural buildings to the rear. The architecture of the facade and southern elevation suggests the building had some status evidenced by the buildings classic features, e.g. the Diocletian window which can also be seen in the outbuildings at Brownsover Hall. Another significant feature is the prominent chimneys. The buildings status is heightened by it's slightly elevated position.

PHOTO 6 - HALL FARM WITHIN LANDSCAPED SETTING



Further north is the prominent Star Farm, a red brick and tile two storey dwelling with a single storey element to the side. The building is situated close to the road and therefore has greater visual impact than the majority of other buildings within the Conservation Area. Only a small grass verge separates the building from the road. The building has a simple, rustic appearance and its prominent location is due to its former role as the public house. The house also accommodates the post office box in the single storey part of the building.

The Conservation Area continues west and the land levels fall in a westerly direction. The highway is dominated by landscaping to the east including Yews with the Hall hidden from view. The dominance of the treed landscaping is affected to a degree by the retaining wall of blue and red brick. At this point on the southern side is the fence which borders the side elevation of the rear garden to Star Farm. The timber fence is well weathered but this is an untypical form of boundary treatment within the Conservation Area.

Adjacent to this is a section of steep banking comprising an open space with trees and planting. This adds to the settlements rural character and provides interesting glimpses of Hall Farm.

Monarch Close is a development of modern housing which borders the Conservation Area. The boundary treatment facing the highway mirrors the rural character of the boundary treatment elsewhere in the Conservation Area having low impact open post and rail fencing with soft landscaping. The new houses are visible from the Conservation Area and incorporate elements of the architecture with relatively small scale massing and simple detailing, matching chimneys and the retention of natural contours. From this development

glimpses of the outbuildings serving Hall Farm are visible on considerably higher ground providing a rustic and rural appearance. The overall grain is low density and the form responds to a hamlet settlement with random orientation of buildings. Planting assists to soften the impact and knit the composition into the setting of the Conservation Area.

From the western most part of the Conservation Area looking eastwards the rural character along the northern side of Brownsover Lane continues with mature landscaping and only the occasional glimpse of the Hall. The approach to the hall, now used as a hotel and conference centre, is relatively low key with only one discreet sign each side. The retaining wall dominates the edge of the lane.

On entering the drive to the hall the approach is well treed, comprising amongst others, Yews and Pines, offering only glimpses of the more formal part of the grounds to the front. To the east there is dense woodland. Gradually the Hall emerges into view and the scale, gothic detailing and imposing height of the building become apparent.

This Victorian Gothic mansion is one of the most impressive Victorian houses in Warwickshire and is a domineering building set within its woodland grounds. The hall comprises red brick with blue brick polychromic patterns with stone mullion and transom fenestration. The front of the hall is a flamboyant spectacle with imposing entrance set in a projecting tower with brick and stone buttresses leading to a large oriel window above. Two further storeys incorporate a decorated parapet wall with steeply pitched roof topped by ornate metal work that is adjacent to an even taller spire. The impression is as intended, a dominant and striking form of architecture to provide an impressive entrance. The remainder of the facade is two storey with a double storey bay window topped with the decorative stone parapet to the west with five heavily gothic, dormer windows animating the slate roof. A number of prominent stone chimneys emerge from behind the dormer windows and the gothic effect on the facade is completed by the metal decorative ridge.

The western elevation is almost as impressive comprising a projecting two storey gable to each end with five windows on the ground, first and second floor. The ground floor has taller more ecclesiastic stone windows with flat headed stone framed windows on the two upper floors. Also visible from this elevation is the parapet wall which continues from the front elevation, the upper most parts of the tower, spire and the dominant chimneys.

PHOTO 7 - WESTERN ELEVATION OF BROWNSOVER HALL



The northern elevation has two main elements, the gothic two storey part with the parapet wall continuing above and the more utilitarian rear section of the hall to the north east corner. This part continues the gothic theme but retains Georgian elements and is less imposing than the other elevations. The Victorian Gothic elements remain in the polychromatic brick work, metal ridge, steeply pitched dormer windows and stone window surrounds but has a more functional appearance than the dramatic elevations to the south and west.

To the east of the hall are a collection of outbuildings which correspond well with the hall but do not compete. The outbuilding immediately adjacent to the eastern elevation of the hall is more functional in character with its fenestration echoing stable architecture.

The courtyard is an impressive collection of outbuildings which have been recently renovated and re-used as accommodation connected to the hotel. The courtyard provides a sense of containment and the scale and grandeur of the buildings emphasizes the wealth and importance of the former occupants of the hall.

To the north of the courtyard is the old stable block, constructed in the early nineteenth century of red brick with a slate roof of two storeys and three bays. The fenestration reflects its former use and the conversion to its current purpose has maintained the integrity of the building and allows its former use to remain evident.

PHOTO 8 - OUTBUILDINGS AT BROWNSOVER HALL



To the east of the courtyard is the coach house, a mid nineteenth century red brick and slate composition with blue brick pattern and dominant, steeply pitched dormer windows. The building has stone dressings with the timber doors still in situ and casement windows. The building mirrors the style of the stable block and is adjacent to the coachmans cottage to the south of the courtyard. Again of red brick and slate with blue brick diapers and stone window dressing it completes the three sides of the courtyard set around the open area of paved blue bricks with granite setts.

Further to the north is the brick walled garden comprising red brick walls with grass within. Again the size and scale of the walled garden demonstrates the scale of operation to sustain the hall and its former occupants when it served as a dwelling.

The buildings are set within mature woodland. The garden to the front of the hall has more of an ornamental character but is bordered by mature trees and has a number of important trees interspersed on the lawn including yew, wellingtonia, holly and pine. Again the land to the rear of the hall has mature trees but is fairly open. To the west of the hall the land slopes down towards the old arm of the canal. The canal meanders along the boundary of the hall grounds and includes an attractive red brick bridge topped with stone copings.

The undeveloped character continues to the east of the hall where there is an expanse of woodland comprising yew, pine, ash and lime. In the north eastern corner of this site there are the remains of extensive outbuildings that would formerly have served the hall. Of red brick and slate the buildings were architect designed and finished to a high standard.

Adjacent to these buildings are hazel and fruit trees, the produce from which would have been consumed by the occupants of the hall. Remains of the old drive running eastwards through woodland to the Hall are evident.

Therefore, this area is characterised by heavy landscaping with a striking form of architecture comprising Victorian Gothic of red and contrasting blue brick, slate and many gothic elements. The hall dominates but there are a number of important service buildings.

LOCAL DETAILS AND FEATURES

The strongest feature of the Conservation Area is the mature landscape including limes, yews, pines and sycamores. This soft landscaping provides a sense of enclosure and also prevents open views of buildings or even a sense of what will next come into view. It has the character of a parkland estate with a semi natural and informal appearance.

The difference in land levels is also a striking feature. The land generally slopes from east to west and from north to south. The difference in levels manifests itself in steps up to buildings (Lawrence Sheriff House, Hall Farm, Brownsover Hall) and is also evident in the approach to the church and Woodlands.

The highway engineering has a limited impact. Road verges are often soft with kerbs only on one side. Road signs, street lights and street furniture are relatively unobtrusive and the post box is traditionally set within a building. Only where Brownsover Lane splits does a higher degree of engineering exist within the Conservation Area.

The influence of the agriculture in the area is prevalent in detailing. The functionality of form is evident in the farmhouse style of architecture with simple details evident in Hall Farm and Star Farm. Elements such as the Diocletian windows are in outbuildings in the Hall and Hall Farm.

Chimneys are a prominent feature within the village. The roofscape of Brownsover Hall is dominated by large chimneys yet on a less grand scale chimneys are also prevalent on Hall Farm and The Parsonage. The majority of houses within the Conservation Area have chimneys and this element is picked up by the modern housing on Monarch Close.

Other common details include the use of casement windows, a vernacular style of architecture with subdivision, corbelling at eaves, use of slate, tile and brick. Overall, the massing of buildings is of a simple small scale often comprising 5.5 metres of depth.

CONTRIBUTION OF UNLISTED BUILDINGS

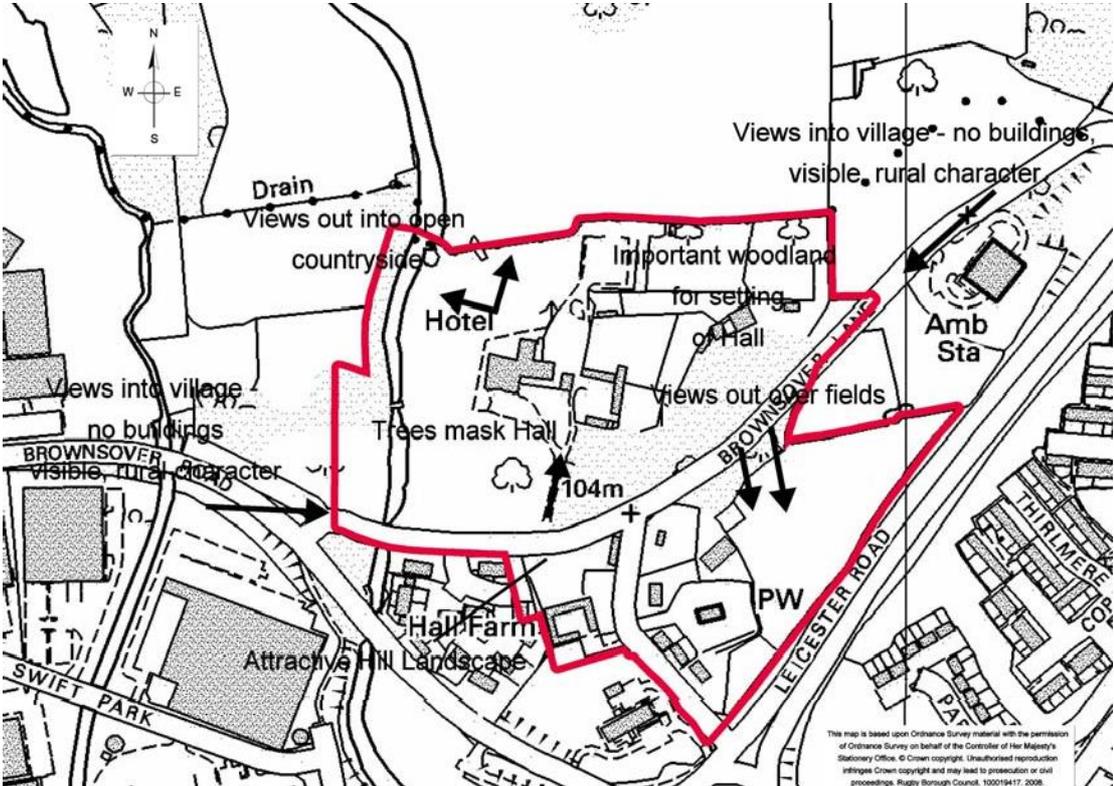
All the buildings within the grounds of Brownsover Hall are listed together with Lawrence Sheriff Cottage and St Michaels Church. Of the non listed buildings Star Farm is an important unlisted building. Its historical use as a public house furthers the understanding of the evolution of the settlement and the important effect of transport to Brownsover. The building is also an attractive structure occupying a prominent location within the Conservation Area.

Hall Farm also offers an important link to the past with farmhouse attached to a building which could have accommodated animals. There is a further impressive range of farm buildings to the rear. Due to its age and range of historic features it ranks as an important unlisted building.

As certain works could be carried out to all unlisted buildings without the benefit of either Planning Permission or Listed Building Consent it is essential that all alterations should be undertaken sympathetically to ensure the integrity of buildings is maintained and the strong architectural elements such as chimneys and fenestration are retained.

MAP 4

KEY VIEWS AND VISTAS



EXISTENCE OF ANY NEUTRAL AREAS

The environmental quality of the Conservation Area is generally good but there are a number of neutral elements. A defining characteristic of the Conservation Area is the soft landscaped boundaries with mature trees and hedges bordering buildings. There are certain boundary treatments which whilst they do not unduly detract from the character or appearance of the Conservation Area could be improved through the replacement of the brick walls and timber fences with native hedge and tree planting. These neutral boundary treatments are accentuated by the dominant and modern driveway treatment where block paving is used. A more traditional surface could soften the overall impact.

A number of the buildings on the southern part of Brownsover Lane are more modern in age and appearance and do not reflect the historic or agricultural character of the conservation area.

There are also areas where highway engineering appears more visually intrusive than necessary. The double height kerb stones to the north of Lawrence Sheriff's House and the pavement to each side and kerbs on Monarch Way are also visually too prominent. In the case of the highway works at Monarch Way this site is beyond the Conservation Area boundary, nevertheless development adjacent can affect its setting.

CONCLUSIONS

The overall historic character of Brownsover Conservation Area has been well maintained and most of its architectural details have been preserved. The settlement is intrinsically linked to its past, with the transport elements (canal and highways). The key landmark building is Brownsover Hall which dominates the area.

More recent development has incorporated elements from the settlements traditional character and maintained a high level of landscaping and open space. Topography and natural landscape has been integrated without major impact. However, additional landscaping, a review of street furniture and boundary treatment could be considered to further enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area.

PRESERVATION AND ENHANCEMENT

General Condition

The Conservation Area is in a generally good condition in terms of buildings and the maintenance of open spaces and landscaping. There are no buildings that are at risk. However, the former outbuildings serving Brownsover Hall on land to the north east of the hall are in a serious state of disrepair.

Problems, pressure and capacity to change

Due to the limited size of the settlement and the lack of opportunity for new residential development there is limited pressure for change. However, the intrinsic character could be affected through the cumulative affect of incremental change, for example changing windows

or removal of chimneys. Such changes could have a major impact on its character and appearance. Alterations to landscaping or boundary treatment, where there is currently mature landscaping, and its replacement with a harsher treatment, such as fencing or a brick wall, would have a significant impact on the character and appearance of the settlement.

The church has not been used for religious purposes since 1987 and as such is an unused building. It has been successfully looked after by a trust since that time.

The main pressure could come from an expansion of Brownsover Hall. Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent have been granted for significant extensions although work has not commenced. Together with the changes to the building such an expansion would result in a more intensive use which would need to be carefully managed to ensure that the quality of the building and its grounds were not adversely affected.

The buildings most at risk are the outbuildings to the north east of the hall. These buildings would have supported the adjacent orchard and are extensive remains of high quality Victorian outbuildings. Although in a fairly dilapidated condition the buildings clearly show the extent and scale of the operation to support the hall during the Victorian period. These buildings and surrounding land are now in different ownership to the Hall and if re-acquainted with the hotel could form part of enlarged grounds and ensure future preservation. Such development would result in an enhanced interpretation and understanding of the hall and its grounds and buildings.

A further area, which if not addressed could have a significant impact on the Conservation Area, is the apparent lack of landscape management. The woodland to the east of Brownsover Hall accommodates a large number of trees including evidence of the former orchard and access. However, work is required to these trees to ensure the long term health and vitality of the woodland. In addition, the general environment suffers from neglect and fly tipping. Without positive management of the landscape this, and other open spaces within the village, could suffer, to the detriment of the Conservation Area.

Suggested boundary changes

The current Conservation Area covers the entire built up area and large areas of undeveloped land to the south east of Brownsover Lane and around Brownsover Hall. Since the Conservation Area was designated the residential development on Monarch Way has taken place. The eastern most part of that development now falls within the Conservation Area. Whilst this development has an impact on the Conservation Area, being immediately adjacent, there is no reason why it should be included within the designation and consideration should be given to realigning the boundary so that it runs along the western boundary of Hall Farm.

Future management proposals

The Local Planning Authority has a duty to ensure that proposals for development either preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. Rugby Borough Council is committed to this duty.

In order to ensure that proposals for development can be adequately addressed the submission of detailed plans and elevation will be required with the submission of any planning application within the Conservation Area. This is likely to require the submission of drawings relating to new building within its context and street scene. 1:50 scale drawings of plans and elevations are considered an appropriate scale. For more detailed proposals and for specific elements of a proposed scheme, for example fenestration details, scale drawings of 1:5 or 1:10 may be required.

Opportunities for enhancement

- removal of harsh boundary walls and fences and replacement with native hedge planting;
- encourage landscape and tree management to ensure tree stock is well maintained and the health of the trees is ensured;
- consideration given to removing more urban surfaces of driveways to a more rural material;
- establish a long term Landscape Management Plan with the owners of Brownsover Hall to ensure good practice and to include regular removal of rubbish;
- consolidation of derelict remains of former outbuildings to the north east of Brownsover Hall;
- removal of car parking to the front of Brownsover Hall;
- clear up of the woodland to the east of the hall and reinterpretation of historic drives;
- improvement to the entrance to Brownsover Hall, reinstate boundaries adjacent to the highway to achieve a more unified boundary;
- appropriate village signs of a rustic form to announce village on both approaches.

APPENDIX 1

Summary of listed buildings in Brownsover Conservation Area

Church of St. Michael and All Angels, Brownsover Lane (Grade B), thirteenth century origins but largely rebuilt by Sir George Gilbert Scott in 1877, nave, chancel. Early English style. Original parts include chancel arch and pair of chancel windows, 2 north windows of nave, west doorway.

Lawrence Sheriffs House, Brownsover Lane (Grade II*), circa 1515, much restored. Timber framework with whitewashed plaster infilling, tiled roof has gabled projection on right of front. Two storeys and attics, 1:1 lattice casement windows, formerly owned by Lawrence Sheriff, founder of Rugby School.

Brownsover Hall, (Grade II*), mid nineteenth century in a Gothic style by Sir George Gilbert Scott. Red brick with stone dressings and blue brick patterns, Welsh slate, gabled roof with 5 gables dormers. Entrance front has balanced design 6 windows wide. Two storeys and attics, 1 window projection on left, tall tower on right with porch under oriel window, pierced parapet to tall French roof. Behind tower to right is stair turret with stone spirelet. Ground floor Gothic cross windows, first floor rectangular cross windows.

Coach-House, Brownsover Hall (Grade II), mid nineteenth century, probably by Sir George Gilbert Scott, in a similar Tudor Gothic style, red brick with blue brick diaper patterns on the south elevation facing the courtyard, stone dressings, slate roof. Stone coped gable ends to long quoins at the rear, on south side three stone framed doorways with pointed arches and boarded doors alternate with three two light stone framed mullioned windows with flat lintels. To the left, two stone framed carriage archways with pointed arches, double vertical boarded doors, three dormers to left have two light stone framed casements with a caernavon arch over each light. The dormer to the right has an upper loading door. All casements have glazed bars.

Stable block, Brownsover Hall (Grade II), on west side of courtyard, early to mid nineteenth century, red brick, slate hipped roof, brick eaves cornice, 2 storeys, 3 bays. Two similar doorways, one to left and one in centre with glazed fanlights with glazing bars set within basket arches, boarded stable doors. A bulls-eye window with pivoting sash to either side of left hand fanlight. To the right, a pair of vertical boarded coach doors under a heavy timber lintel. On first floor three windows set within basket arches, vertical bars to sides and a central casement to each.

Coachman's Cottage, Brownsover Hall (grade II), mid nineteenth century, probably by Sir George Gilbert Scott, red brick with blue brick diaper patterns and details, stone dressings, slate roofs. Three bay block of single storey and attic, half hipped roof with two tall gabled dormers to front, central brick ridge stack, a tall single storey wing to right of block with a stone coped end gable and a gable and stack. Central entrance doorway to main block with a large open gabled hood supported on heavy timber brackets. Stone framed and mullioned windows: 4 light casements to right of porch, a two light casement to the left and in each of the dormers. Similar two light windows to wing under brick relieving arches. All casements have glazing bars.

Tree Preservation Orders

TPO 99 covers G1, 22 limes and 7 yews, G2, 15 limes and 1 yew, T7 sycamore, T8 a yew at St Michaels Church, Brownsover Lane. T1, limes adjacent to The Cottage and T9, a lime at The Church House.

APPENDIX 2

Useful Contacts

A copy of this appraisal will be available at the Rugby Library, the Rugby Borough Council's Main Reception and on the Council's website at www.rugby.gov.uk.

For specific information about the conservation area and conservation issues please contact:

Development Strategy
Rugby Borough Council
Town Hall
Evreux Way
Rugby
CV21 2RR

Tel: 01788 533 533

Email: localplan@rugby.gov.uk

For further information relating to listed buildings and conservation areas contact:

Historic England
The Axis
10 Holliday Street
Birmingham
B1 1TG

Tel: 0121 625 6888

Email: midlands@HistoricEngland.org.uk

For detailed advice on repairing and restoring Georgian houses, contact:

The Georgian Group
6 Fitzroy Square
London
W1T 5DX

Tel: 087 1750 2936

Email: office@georgiangroup.org.uk

For "Care for Victorian Houses" leaflet, contact:

The Victorian Society
1 Priory Gardens
Bedford Park
London
W4 1TT

Tel: 020 8994 1019

Email: admin@victoriansociety.org.uk

For a range of technical advice leaflets, contact:

The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB)
37 Spital Square
London
E1 6DY

Tel: 020 7377 1644.

Email: info@spab.org.uk

APPENDIX 3

Bibliography

- The Buildings of England – Warwickshire. Nikolaus Pevsner and Alexandra Wedgewood.
- Warwickshire Towns and Villages Geoff Allen
- Old Brownsover Clifton on Dunsmore Local History Group
- Warwickshire County Homes Geoffrey Tyack
- Planning and the Historic Environment (PPG15)
- Archaeology and Planning (PPG16)
- Rugby Borough Local Plan 2006

GLOSSARY

Bargeboards: board at the gable of a building covering the ends of the horizontal roof timbers and forming an inverted 'V', often pierced and decorated.

Bay window: window of one or more storeys projecting from the face of the window at ground level.

Bond: in brickwork, the pattern of long sides (stretches) and short ends (headers) produced on the face of a wall by laying bricks in a particular way.

Casement: a frame enclosing glass which is hinged at the side.

Diocletian Window: a semicircular window divided vertically into three parts.

Dormer window: window standing up vertically from the slope of a roof.

Gothic: the period of medieval architecture, interpreted in later styles, e.g. Victorian Gothic.

Mullion: vertical member between the lights of a window opening.

Transom: horizontal member between the lights of a window opening.

Vernacular: local or traditional style.