



The Milestone Society

POLICY : POSITION & CONSERVATION OF MILESTONES

- Milestones should be restored to the condition and position indicated by the earliest records.
- Milestones should remain in public ownership with unrestricted public access and good visibility to travellers along the relevant road.
- The presumption is in favour of retaining the stone in its original position and condition, subject to proper research.
- Safety, access, visibility or road reconstruction may justify repositioning a milestone.

The Milestone Society recognises that these preferred outcomes may not always be possible or practicable and follows a hierarchical approach to assessing alternatives. The higher each case can be placed the better; a low option should not be pursued where a higher one is achievable. **Where a stone enjoys statutory protection, alterations to position or character require consent** (usually from the local authority) against an application with a rationale broadly following the precepts of this policy note.

The positional hierarchy

The milestone should be located on public ground, at a position in the descending order of preference below:

1. at its precise original position, where the evidence allows (often where it was found),
2. at the earliest recorded map reference,
3. on the opposite side of the road to these positions if it is safer or more visible (provided the milestone is not “handed” so the inscription becomes incorrect),
4. within 25m of the original position but in a safer place,
5. within 100m of the original position but in a safer place with much better public access,
6. on an abandoned section of road provided travellers such as cyclists or walkers pass along the route,
7. on a new section of road at the closest distance, when the old road is no longer a through route for any type of traveller
8. outside a relevant public building or on public open space, provided it does not mislead
9. inside a museum.

Factors such as loss of the original site due to redevelopment or road building, safe access for work, hazard to road-users, protection from the risk of vehicular impact, long term care or security, protection from serious soiling or excessive and constant water splash or tree drip may justify a lower option. If this is the case and alteration to the position or condition of the stone is accepted, the change should be recorded in the appropriate historic environment record (HER) together with the reasons for that change.

Condition and conservation

The Milestone Society seeks to adhere to the founding principles of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings. So far as they apply to the conservation of milestones these are to:

- Ensure that conservation/intervention work should be kept to a minimum, provided a good long-lasting result is achieved
- Use traditional techniques and 'breathable' materials in preference to modern plastic or cement-based solutions
- Carry out proper research, so that all decisions affecting the character of a milestone are evidenced and defensible.
- Where research is lacking, to conserve the stone as found and complete with its later overlays. These may reflect interestingly on changes in the way the stone has been used.

The Condition hierarchy

Any conservation should be mindful of and sympathetic to the following in descending order of preference:

1. the coating, lettering and colour indicated by old photographs or the residues on the milestone and the inscription of the original carving,
2. repairs involving pinning and gluing a large section of the original stone, welding or bolting the original metal, painting in of eroded letters and making good eroded spots,
3. repairs involving replacement of larger sections of broken material, or recarving of inscriptions where it is clear that the original form can be replicated,
4. replacement of the monument with a new copy based on residues or similar markers in the series. This should indicate that it is a copy,
5. replacement with another marker that is not a true copy. This should indicate that it is not the original marker.

Factors such as the need to retain the markers in a consistent, unbroken series, the requirement to have a readable inscription to give the marker context and the probability that the restoration will survive for a long period may justify a lower option.

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