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RELOCATION OF MILESTONE, HALL ROAD, ROCHFORD

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

FEBRUARY 2013

Project Title

Relocation of Milestone

Site Address

Opposite Birches and Elm Lodge, north of Hall Road, Rochford

Local Planning Authority

Rochford District Council

Design Team

Client

Planning consultant

Civil Engineering consultant

Heritage consultant

Bellway Homes

JCN Design

Ardent Consulting Engineers

Woodhall Planning & Conservation

Bellway Homes and JCN Design would like to thank the Milestone Society and, in particular, their Vice Chair, John Nicholls, for providing background information and details of their policies on the position and conservation of milestones as part of the preparation of this application for listed building consent.

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1. Introduction

This Design and Access Statement accompanies an application for listed building consent to relocate the milestone of the northern side of Hall Road, Rochford (opposite Birches and Elm Lodge) to the east as part of the development of the adjoining land to create 600 new homes pursuant to outline planning permission 10/00234/OUT. This statement has been written to meet the requirements of Planning (Applications for Planning Permission, Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Amendment) (England) Order 2006.

The eastern point of access to the residential development requires Hall Road to be widened on its northern side in order to create space for a T-junction with a "ghost" right-turn lane. The current position of the milestone means that it falls within both the widened road and the access road into the site, therefore it is essential that the stone be relocated. The proposed new position is on the north side of the road and to the east of the junction, within the grass verge to the rear of the footway.

This statement forms part of the application for listed building consent, and should be read in conjunction with rest of the information that has been submitted in support of the proposal.

2. Context and Background

Location

The milestone is on the northern side of Hall Road, Rochford, opposite Birches and Elm Lodge. It stands close to the edge of the road, in a small grass verge that separates the road from its footpath – the footpath passes to the rear of the stone.

The stone is roughly rectangular with a rounded top, bearing the words "LONDON 39 SOUTHEND 4 MILES" arranged one above the other on the southern face (facing the road). There is also a benchmark on top of the stone. The stone is painted white, with the words, numbers and benchmark painted black. It is understood that the stone was erected in the 18th Century by the Rochford Hundred Turnpike Trust and it remains one of a sequence of stones still in place along the A129 and B1013 between Rochford and Billericay.



Above: the milestone sits on the northern side of the road, opposite Birches and Elm Lodge (the latter is behind the hedge) – it can be seen to the right of the approaching van. Note that the path moves away from the edge of the road in order to pass behind the stone.

Special architectural or historic interest

Please refer to the Heritage Statement, submitted as part of the application for listed building consent. The milestone is Grade II listed.

Reasons for relocation

The land to the north of Hall Road was identified as a potential location for residential as part of the preparation of Rochford District Council's Local Development Framework. In parallel with the promotion of the site through the planning policy process, an application for outline planning permission was submitted in April 2010. In addition to the creation of 600 new homes, a new primary school and public open space, the principle of two points of access was also established.

The final design for access to the site comprises a new roundabout at the western end of the site and a T-junction at the eastern end. The eastern point of access will be created by widening Hall Road on its northern side in order to create a "ghost" lane so that traffic heading away from Rochford that wishes to turn right into the site can wait without blocking the flow of westbound vehicles. The widened road will be roughly 50% wider than the existing road, although only for the short distance where the ghost island is required. The T-junction connects directly to the spine road that will loop around the site and back to the roundabout at the western end of the site. The design for the junction shows that the existing grass verge between the carriageway and footway on Hall Road will be recreated on the northern side of the new junction, complimenting the form of the new spine road, which will also have grass verges to help separate pedestrians from passing traffic and to provide space for boulevard tree planting.

As part of the preparation of the application for outline planning permission, a topographical survey of the site was carried out in early 2010. The survey included full details of the land along the Hall Road frontage, allowing a position for the eastern access to be selected on the basis of minimising the number of mature trees that would need to be felled in order to create the new junction, as well as ensuring that the necessary sight lines could be achieved.

The milestone was knocked over in August 2009 and removed from the site for safe keeping. It was returned in June 2010 (as described on the following page) and re-erected in its original location – unfortunately, this meant that the stone was not on-site when the topographical survey was prepared, meaning that its presence was not taken into account during the design of the road junction or as part of the consideration of the application for outline planning permission. The return of the stone revealed the clash with the new junction to be identified: consideration was required as to whether the milestone should be repositioned or the junction should be redesigned.

The other two are alongside the B1002 (former A12) in Margarettling and were painted in mid-August 2010 by person or persons unknown. The fortunes of the 'LONDON 25' have been rather mixed over the last eight years. It was

broken just below ground level (either as vehicle strike or an aborted theft attempt) and repaired by the adjacent Lamar engineering company. Then in the spring of 2010 it was struck by a vehicle when the left edge was damaged.



Left to right: The re-erected Baythorne End stone; Slammer stone re-erected by the milepost; 'LONDON 34' at Hatfield Peverel already starting to show signs of rust in less than a year; 'LONDON 25' and the grade II listed 'LONDON 24' at Margarettling.

Reinstating an Essex milestone [Mike Davies]

We are fortunate in my part of south east Essex to have a number of milestones and like many (all?) of us I always look out for these on my local travels. Imagine my horror when in August of 2009 while passing milestone 'LONDON 39' in Hall Road, Rochford I noticed it leaning to one side in between a number of contractor's vans that were parked on the grass verge. I returned later the same day and my worst fears were confirmed. It had been knocked completely flat. No doubt it was an accident but if left worse could have followed.

I immediately contacted our Essex rep John Nicholls who delegated me to make representations to some local listed building people and district council contacts. A couple of frustrating days of telephone calls and e-mails and it was arranged for its removal and safekeeping by Essex County Council Highways. Some locals thought it has been lost/removed/stolen but I was able to set their minds at rest.

Early in 2010 the contractors had left the site but a combination of poor weather and unavoidable delays within ECC meant that the return of the milestone was held up. Finally it was arranged that the re-erection would take place on 17 June 2010. An early start was made and the shallow hole was dug (the stone lacks its bottom part) and the base filled with shingle for drainage. When the contractors for Highways returned the milestone to Hall Road John Nicholls

and I were ready to re-erect the stone. Handyman is not a word my family or friends would use to describe me but I was more than happy to work as an apprentice to John's expertise. I was even seen at one stage to be adding some water to something called rapid setting concrete as John then weaved his magic wand.

Within a short time we had returned the milestone to its exact location, encased its lower part within a concrete base and then dressed the surround to ensure rainwater seeps away from the base as well as aiding identification to local council grass trimmers to avoid damage to the stone. Shortly we will return to the site to prepare and repaint the stone and letters, and our work will be complete.

As a relatively new member of the Milestone Society it would be hard to find a better tutor/mentor than John Nicholls our Essex rep. I am already looking forward to our next task.

[Editor's follow up... After the milestone was re-erected Mike wrote up a press release that appeared in a couple of local papers. It caught the eye of the listed buildings officer who was most concerned that listed buildings consent had not been sought before removing the stone from site and replacing it. I had a lengthy phone chat with the listed buildings man and I have learned a lot about listed buildings and he has found out a lot more about milestones. So if its listed make sure you keep the listed buildings people informed of your every move.]



The 'LONDON 39' in 2009. [M Davies] All prepared for re-erection The completed works Mike Davies and John

HUNTINGDONSHIRE. [Michael Knight]

Two milestones have been returned to their near-original sites; on the B1040 in Hemingford parish, the other just away from the busy A1/A14 road junction. Grainne Farrington (Cambs) had discovered both, though at different times.

The 'Hilton' milestone had been safely housed in a private garden and the custodian had chiselled the name of his own

village on a blank face. When acquired for restoration the original inscription of Hemingford was exposed and highlighted after the District Council had re-sited the marker. This achievement concludes a long-term aim to have all three of the parish's milestones back on site along the 1775 tumpike road across three counties between Bury and Stratton.

Above: extract from the September 2010 edition of On the Ground, the annual review of the Milestone Society, detailing how the milestone was knocked over, removed for safe keeping and returned to the site and re-erected between August 2009 and June 2010 (extract provided by John Nicholls, Vice Chair and Essex county representative for the Milestone Society).

The position of the junction was carefully considered as part of the design of the scheme, with the road widening and the route into the site designed in accordance with the current Essex County Council highways standards. The scheme has been subject to safety audits and has also been subjected to public scrutiny through the application for outline planning permission. The widening of the road and the new junction has been positioned in the location that offers the safest road layout that can be achieved, whilst also avoiding the need to remove mature trees that mark the southern edge of the site.

On the other hand, it is believed that the milestone is currently standing in the position it has occupied since the 18th Century, although it is known that it was removed recently and may have been removed before, as the lower part of the stone is missing. As set out in the Heritage Statement, the stone is first shown on the 1777 Chapman and André map of Essex and has been consistently shown in the same location on historic maps thereafter. It is one of several milestones remaining on the route from Billericay to Southend and still relates to stones that remain in place one mile to the east and west.

As such, the proposal to relocate the milestone has been carefully considered. Whilst it is unfortunate that the stone was not present when the topographical survey was carried out, the works to Hall Road and the design of the new junction have been designed in full and may result in a less satisfactory design if the junction were to be moved to the east or west. Conversely, although the relocation of the stone to a new position would require it to be moved from what is believed to be its original position, it would be possible for it to be relocated close by without harming the integrity of its purpose as a milestone.

Planning Policy

Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraphs 126 to 141) addresses the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment. As one of eight milestones in the district that have been placed on the List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest, the stone is considered to be a "designated heritage asset". Paragraph 132 states that:

"When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation... Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification."

Paragraph 133 goes on to state that substantial harm or total loss of significance of a designated heritage asset is sufficient reason of a local planning authority to refuse listed building consent. A milestone is somewhat unusual in terms of a designated heritage asset, in that it can be repositioned in a way that a building, ship wreck or battlefield cannot, although as set out

above, any harm or loss of significance must still be justified. It is intended that the stone be repositioned to the edge of the widened road and clear of the junction that will provide access to the new residential area, meaning that its significance can be maintained even though its current position will be within the carriageway of the widened road.

Paragraph 134 reads:

"Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use."

It is perceived that the relocation of the milestone will not lead to substantial harm to its significance, allowing the benefits of the road widening and the creation of 600 new homes on the edge of Rochford to be taken into consideration when considering the proposal. The site is identified as a location for strategic residential development in the adopted Core Strategy, with an outline planning permission now in place, which includes details of the access to the site. The T-junction at the eastern end of the site has been designed to create the safest possible route into and out of the site whilst maintaining the free flow of traffic on Hall Road and minimising the number of mature trees that will be removed on the northern side of the road. It should also be noted that the proposed new position of the milestone will allow the lettering to be seen from the footpath, offering a better understanding of its significance to travellers passing by on foot.

Rochford District Council adopted their Core Strategy in December 2011. In addition to the allocation of 600 new homes to the west of Rochford in *Policy H2 – Extensions to residential envelopes and phasing*, as mentioned above, Chapter 5 deals with the character of place. There are no specific policies relating to listed buildings, although the document does note that "the Council will support national policies that seek to protect Listed Buildings and pay particular attention to retaining their character".

Work is progressing on the Development Management DPD, with the pre-submission version expected to be released for consultation in February 2013. The February 2010 draft did not include any policies to specifically address works to listed buildings, although reference is made in terms of design constraints, a local list of buildings of local interest, conversion and re-use of agricultural buildings and advertisements on or close to listed buildings. Until the DPD is adopted, the Replacement Rochford District Local Plan (2006) remains in place, with policies *BC3: Alterations to Listed Buildings* and *BC4: Demolition of Listed Buildings* applicable to the proposal but not drafted in a way that relates to the implications of a scheme to relocate a milestone.

Milestone Society – Policy Note 1

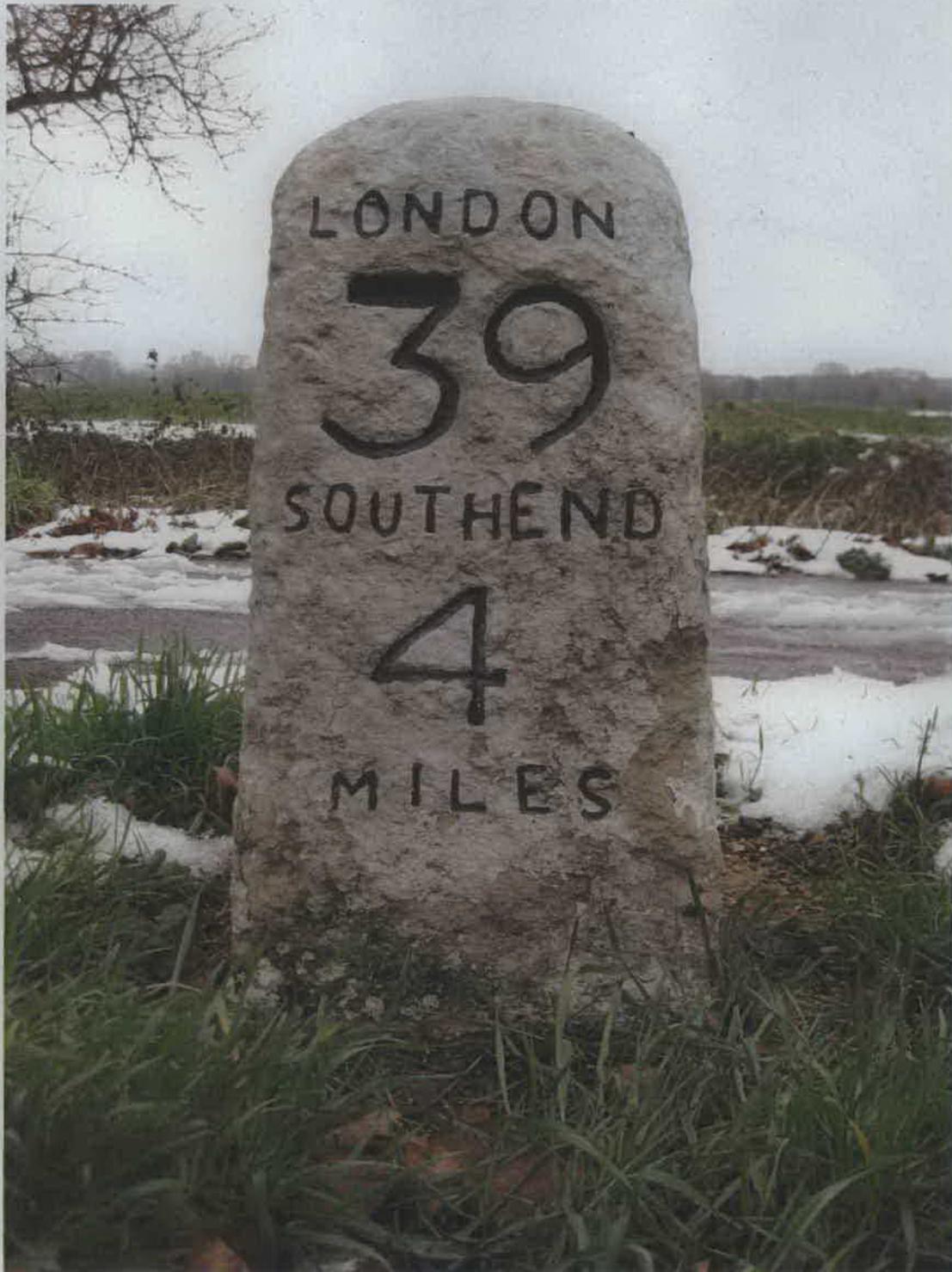
The Milestone Society has produced guidance on the position and conservation of milestones (published December 2009). There is a presumption in favour of retaining the stone in its original position and condition, as already demonstrated by the re-erection works carried out in the summer of 2010. A "positional hierarchy" is also set out, with the milestone to be located on public ground at a position in descending order of preference:

1. At its precise original position.
2. At the earliest recorded map reference.
3. On the opposite side of the road if it is safer or more visible (providing the stone does not include a directional inscription that would become incorrect).
4. Within 25 metres of the original position, but in a safer place.
5. Within 100 metres of the original position, but in a safer place with better public access.
6. On an abandoned section of road, provided 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.
8. Outside a relevant public building or on public open space (providing that it does not mislead).
9. Inside a museum.

To reposition the milestone close by, on the north side of the road, is ranked fourth on the positional hierarchy. The possibility of moving the stone to the south side of the road was considered (rank 3), but it would not be as visible because the thick hedge around Elm Lodge obscures view when heading west. Furthermore, retaining a position on the north side of the road is in keeping with historic maps (rank 2) and also provides better protection from passing traffic.

Photographic survey

Below: view of the south face of the milestone, showing the wording, tapered form and curved top. The entrance to the new residential development will run straight into the field in the background.



Below: view of the western side of the milestone, looking east towards the centre of Rochford. The tapered form of the stone is clearly visible, with a chunk of stone missing from the north western corner. The highest point of the curved top to the stone stands at 570mm above the ground.





Above: three-quarter view of the stone from the south west, showing the curved edges and benchmark to the top.

3. The Proposal

Layout

The application for listed building consent proposes that the milestone be relocated to the north east of its current position so that it is to the rear of the footway on the east side of the new road junction. The stone will be moved 11.3 metres to the east and 4.8 metres to the north, placing it 12.5 metres away from its current position.

The setting of the milestone on the edge of the road is important, reflecting its purpose as a waymarker on the turnpike from Southend towards London. The new position has been determined through reference to the Milestone Society's policy note on the position and conservation of milestones (described above): the scheme for the widening of the road and the creation of a T-junction to serve the residential development of 600 new homes means that it cannot remain in its current position, therefore it is proposed that the stone is repositioned within 25 metres of its original position but in a safer place, an option which is ranked fourth on their positional hierarchy. Leaving the stone on the north side of the road also creates consistency with historic maps of the area.



Above: view of the milestone from the opposite side of Hall Road, looking northeastwards to the land with outline planning permission for up to 600 new homes. It is proposed that the stone will be moved to the position marked by the red arrow.



Above: view of the western side of the milestone, looking eastwards – note the proximity of passing traffic on Hall Road and the lack of protection. It is proposed that the stone will be moved to the position marked by the red arrow, which will be behind the footway to the new T-junction and widened road.

The potential to relocate the stone to the opposite side of the road (rank 3) was considered, but the stone would be hidden from view by the hedge surrounding Elm Lodge, making it less visible than the current or proposed positions.

Instead, it is proposed that the milestone be positioned in the eastern corner of the new junction, set back from the widened road and new access behind a footpath that is, in turn, separated from the carriageway of the road by a grass verge. The ditch that runs parallel to Hall Road will be culverted as it passes under the new access road and the small trees, sections of hedge and scrub to either side of the road will be removed in order to improve visibility at the junction – which will also serve to make the milestone more visible and avoid any potential for it to become “tucked away” at the edge of the road.

Positioning the milestone behind the footway will allow the front face to be seen by pedestrians, allowing more passers-by to understand its relevance and purpose as a designated heritage asset. It will also place the stone further away from passing vehicles, protecting it from accidental damage and from the water and dirt that is thrown up by passing vehicles.

Scale

The stone will be repositioned at the same height as it presently sits on the edge of the road: the highest point of the curbed top sits 570mm above ground level. Although it will be further from the road by virtue of being set back behind the footpath, the stone is of sufficient size that it will still be clearly visible from passing vehicles.

Appearance

It is not proposed that the stone be repainted or redecorated as part of the process of moving it to its new location, as such works were undertaken as recently as the summer of 2010. However, should the lower section of the stone be discovered during the works to create the new junction, the possibility of repair will be considered if it is a practical proposition.

Access

The milestone will be placed close to the edge of the new footpath, providing simple and safe access for maintenance. The path, widened road and new junction are all part of the adopted highway and the milestone will be continue to be positioned within the land that is maintained in perpetuity by Essex County Council.