

WHC Nomination Documentation

File name: 373.pdf UNESCO Region EUROPE

SITE NAME ("TITLE") Stonehenge, Avebury and Associated Sites

DATE OF INSCRIPTION ("SUBJECT") 28/11/1996

STATE PARTY ("AUTHOR") UNITED KINGDOM

CRITERIA ("KEY WORDS") C (i)(ii)(iii)

DECISION OF THE WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE:
10th Session

The Committee noted with satisfaction the assurances provided by the authorities of the United Kingdom that the closure of the road which crosses the avenue at Stonehenge was receiving serious consideration as part of the overall plans for the future management of the site.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION:

Stonehenge and Avebury, in Wiltshire, are among the most famous groups of megaliths in the world. These two sanctuaries are formed of circles of menhirs arranged in a pattern whose astronomical significance is still unexplained. These holy places and the various nearby neolithic sites offer an incomparable testimony to prehistoric times.

1.b. State, province or region: England, Wiltshire

1.d Exact location: Stonehenge O.S. Series 1:50000 Map Sheet 184:Nat.Grid Ref.SU 123422

51°11' N, 1°51' W

Avebury O.S. Series 1:50000 Map Sheet 173:Nat.Grid Ref.SU 103700

51°27' N, 1°51' W

Associated Sites in State Guardianship

The Sanctuary, Overton Hill	173	SU 118679
Silbury Hill	173	SU 100685
West Kennet Avenue, Avebury	173	SU 105695
West Kennet, Long Barrow	173	SU 104677
Windmill Hill	173	SU 086714
Woodhenge	184	SU 151434

WORLD HERITAGE CONVENTION

**STONEHENGE, AVEBURY
AND ASSOCIATED SITES**

Cultural Properties: U.K.Nomination

343

02-12-1985

WORLD HERITAGE CONVENTION

CULTURAL PROPERTIES: U.K. NOMINATION

STONEHENGE, AVEBURY AND ASSOCIATED SITES.

**Prepared by the Historic Buildings
and Monuments Commission for England on
behalf of the Department of the Environment**

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Maps and plans

Photographs

Colour slides (in separate folder)

SUMMARY.

Stonehenge and Avebury, and Associated Sites

Prehistoric stone circles and henges are monuments unique to Neolithic Britain. Of the thousand or so stone circles still surviving in Britain, the most famous and extensive are Stonehenge and Avebury, both in Wiltshire, in south central England.

Stonehenge was the most evolved and architecturally complex circle of Neolithic and early Bronze age Britain. It dates from c. 3100 B.C. and underwent several phases of construction and change until its final abandonment by c. 1100 B.C. The importation, shaping and erection of the huge stones involved in the building of the monument, indicate the highly organised social structure of Neolithic society. The stone circle has been interpreted as a temple, with astronomical and calendrical alignments, capable of observing the rising sun at mid-summer. Stonehenge is still in a remarkable state of preservation, in spite of the enormous interest it has provoked over the last 500 years. Stonehenge formed the focus of a number of important ritual monuments on Salisbury plain, many of which are also remarkably intact.

Avebury Stone Circle, some 30 km. to the north of Stonehenge is the largest stone circle in Britain. In form and structure it is quite different to Stonehenge, although the period of use, during the third and earlier second millennia B.C. is comparable. Avebury consists of a huge outer bank and ditch, within which were an outer and two smaller inner circles of standing stones. In all some 180 local, unshaped stones were used. Leading from two of the four causewayed entrances of the circle were two avenues of parallel standing stones, connecting the great circle of Avebury with other ritual monuments. Like Stonehenge, Avebury also formed the focus of an important Neolithic landscape of monumental constructions such as Silbury Hill.

Avebury was partially reconstructed in the 1930's following excavation. It still remains one of the best preserved and most enigmatic of the stone circles of Britain.

The nomination includes the associated sites of The Sanctuary, Overton Hill; Silbury Hill; West Kennet Avenue, Avebury; West Kennet, Long Barrow; Windmill Hill; Woodhenge.

DOSSIER

1. Specific Location.

- a) Country England, U.K.
- b) State, Province or Region. Wiltshire
- c) Name of property Stonehenge, Avebury and associated sites
- d) Exact location on map and indication of geographical coordinates
- Stonehenge
O.S. Series 1:50,000 Map Sheet 184:Nat.Grid Ref.SU 123422
51° 11N, 1° 51W
- Avebury
O.S. Series 1:50,000 Map Sheet 173:Nat.Grid Ref.SU 103700
51° 27N 1° 51W.
- Associated Sites in State Guardianship
- | | | |
|-----------------------------|-----|-----------|
| The Sanctuary, Overton Hill | 173 | SU 118679 |
| Silbury Hill | 173 | SU 100685 |
| West Kennet Avenue,Avebury | 173 | SU 105695 |
| West Kennet,Long Barrow | 173 | SU 104677 |
| Windmill Hill | 173 | SU 086714 |
| Woodhenge | 184 | SU 151434 |

2. Juridicial data.

- a) Owner
- Stonehenge
Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England,
Fortress House, 23 Savile Row, London W1X 2HE on behalf
of State.
- Avebury
National Trust for England,
36, Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1H 9AS.
- Associated Sites
Multiple ownership.
- b) Legal Status.
- Stonehenge. State ownership.
Avebury. National Trust for England
Associated Sites. Multiple private ownerships
- Stonehenge,Avebury and sites listed under 1(d)above under guardianship of State. Remaining sites scheduled as Ancient Monuments under Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act of 1979.
- All guardianship sites accessible to public.Access to scheduled sites by private agreement.
- c) Responsible administration
- Stonehenge & Avebury
Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England
Fortress House, 23 Savile Row,London W1X 2HE.

3. Identification.

a) Description and inventory

Stonehenge

Stonehenge is the most famous, best-preserved and most architecturally sophisticated stone Circle in Europe. The stone temple-structure is a circular monument with lintels, surrounded by an earthen bank and ditch, and containing a number of other features. An avenue of parallel banks leads away from the single entrance of the henge for 2780m.

The landscape surrounding Stonehenge contains many related prehistoric monuments, including the Cursus, Durrington Walls, Woodhenge and a large number of Neolithic and Bronze age barrows. The fine landscape of the Stonehenge area is justly famous for the range of monuments and their importance in European prehistory.

Stonehenge

The earliest phase of Stonehenge dates from c.3100 B.C. with the construction of the surrounding circular bank and ditch, measuring 97.5m in diameter. Within the circle thus formed, were 56 circular holes around the perimeter, known as the Aubrey holes. Many contained cremated human remains of later phases, but their original purpose remains uncertain. The heelstone outside the entrance of the earthen henge was also erected during this phase. The four Station Stones may be contemporary. There may also have been a setting of timber uprights at the centre. Current evidence indicates that the site was then abandoned until the end of the third millenium B.C. with the focus of activity to the east at Woodhenge and Durrington Walls.

The second phase of construction (c. 2100-2000 B.C.) saw a re-alignment of the original entrance of the henge, and the construction of the Avenue for c.500 m. The interior was changed radically, with some 80 bluestones (from the Preselly mountains of Pembroke) set up in two parallel and incomplete semi-circles. Several Sarsen stones were raised at the entrance to the henge.

The third phase of construction c.2000 B.C. was the most substantial. The incomplete Bluestone circle was removed, and the main circle of 30 sarsen uprights and 30 lintels raised together with the inner horseshoe arrangement of 5 paired trilithons. The whole was aligned towards the rising of the midsummer sun. The sarsens were brought from the Marlborough Downs some 30 km. to the north, and dressed to curved and tapering blocks, with mortice and tenon joints on the lintels. The upright sarsens are 4.5 m. high and each weigh c.25 tonnes. The larger trilithon uprights of the inner horseshoe weigh as much as 50 tonnes. The paired stones at the entrance of the henge date from this phase.

Some time after the completion of the circle, further modifications took place, involving the re-shaping and re-erection of some 20 of the original bluestones in an oval setting following the line of the earlier bluestone semi-circle. Some of these may have been set up as miniature trilithons imitating the surrounding sarsen trilithons. This project appears to have been unfinished. Around the sarsen circle two parallel lines of pits were dug c. 1550 B.C. known as the Y and Z holes. Soon after this, a final phase saw the re-setting of the bluestone uprights into a circle around both the sarsen horseshoe and the bluestone semi-circle. The stones were shaped as alternating pillars and obelisks. A large bluestone was set on the axial line inside the central and highest trilithon.

Around 1100 B.C. the Avenue was extended, indicating that the temple was still in use. There is no clear evidence to show when it was finally abandoned. There is however, a clear record of gradual destruction throughout the Medieval and later periods, with the breaking and removal of several stones. Throughout the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries A.D. Stonehenge was studied, excavated and plundered. It came into state ownership in 1918. Since that time it has been partially excavated 6 times, and several stones have been straightened or re-erected.

The astronomical alignment of Stonehenge towards the rising sun at summer solstice was important from the second phase of construction during the later Neolithic. The Sarsen circle of the third phase is the most developed example of henge architecture in prehistoric Europe, and has been subjected to numerous astronomical and calendrical studies, indicating the detailed astronomical knowledge of Neolithic communities in Wessex.

Monuments Scheduled or under Guardianship surrounding Stonehenge.

Robin Hood Ball lies 4.3 km. to the NNW of Stonehenge, and represents the earliest Neolithic settlement in the area. The causewayed camp consists of two surrounding banks and ditches and dates from c. 4000 - 3000 B.C.

Some 15 Neolithic long Barrows dating from the same period lie within a 5 km. radius of Stonehenge, and indicate the first use of the area for ritual monuments.

The Cursus lies some 800 m. to the north of Stonehenge. It is an earthwork consisting of parallel banks/ditches, and extends for 2.8 km. The Lesser Cursus, a similar monument, lies to the west and contained offerings of antler on the base of the ditch. They both date from before 2500 B.C. and correspond with the earlier Neolithic activities in the area.

Woodhenge lies 3 km. to the north-east of Stonehenge. Within a circular earthen bank and ditch c. 85m. in diameter the henge consisted of 6 concentric rings of post holes, the largest c. 45 m. in diameter. The central point was marked by a child burial.

Tentative reconstructions of the henge suggest that it was a large circular post built and roofed temple building, open at the centre. It was in use c.2300 B.C.

Durrington Walls immediately to the north of Woodhenge revealed 2 further circular buildings during excavations in 1966-8. The north circle was 14.5 m. in diameter, the south with two phases, was first 23 m. and subsequently 39 m. in diameter. Both dated from c. 2450 B.C. Surrounding the two excavated circles was a huge henge. The bank was c.3 m. high and the ditch 6 m. deep. The irregular enclosure is over 470° m. in diameter. The earliest use of the site was from c.3200 B.C.

Surrounding the Stonehenge area are numerous early Bronze Age Round Barrows, dating from the earlier second millennium B.C. Mostly grouped in cemeteries, they form a distinctive feature, clustering around the stone temple and earlier Neolithic Long Barrows, indicating some 1500 years of continuous landscaping and monument building.

Avebury and surrounding monuments

Avebury is the largest prehistoric stone circle in Europe. It forms the nucleus of a remarkable Neolithic complex of ritual and domestic monuments, including Silbury Hill, the West Kennet Avenue, The West Kennet Long Barrow, Windmill Hill and the Sanctuary.

The Great Circle of Avebury consists of a huge, irregular, outer bank and ditch, 1.3 km. in circumference, with 4 causewayed entrances, and enclosing an area of 11.5 ha. Within the circle was an outer ring of about 100 standing stones, and two smaller inner stone circles. In all, the monument had about 180 standing stones. The centre point of the north circle originally had 3 large standing stones, known as the Cove, of which 2 remain. The southern circle was more complex and had an alignment of small stones around a huge pillar-shaped stone known as the Obelisk. Three pits were placed behind the Obelisk.

Pottery evidence indicates that the site was constructed and in use before the mid - third millennium B.C. during the middle Neolithic. It continued in use until the end of the third millennium B.C. in the final Neolithic. No excavation has taken place over the last 45 years, and unlike Stonehenge no C14 dates or precise construction sequences are available. Keiller bought the circle in 1934 and after excavation, re-erected many of the buried stones.

Leading from the south and west entrances of the circle were two Avenues of upright paired stones. The southern or West Kennet Avenue has been investigated and partially reconstructed. It extended for 2.4 km. along a meandering course to the Sanctuary on Overton Hill. Originally, about 100 pairs of standing stones placed 15 m. apart and at 24 m. intervals made up a ceremonial way. Only one third has been excavated and reconstructed. The western or Beckhampton Avenue is almost totally destroyed but was recorded by William Stukeley between 1720-1724. A number of Stone-holes have been located and two stones, The Long Stones, remain standing. Several of the West Kennet Avenue Stones had later Beaker Burials associated, and it is thought that the Avenues date from the late Neolithic in the last quarter of the third millennium B.C.

The Sanctuary on Overton Hill was also recorded by Stukeley, and was located and excavated in 1930. The site had a long and complex history, from the earlier Neolithic before the mid-third millennium B.C. through to the end of the millennia in the Beaker period. The site consisted of concentric circles of standing wood and stone uprights, and has been tentatively reconstructed as a structure like woodhenge. The earliest phase was a simple post structure 4.3 m. in diameter. The second was larger and more complex, 12 m. in diameter. The third

phase was 15 m. in diameter and replaced all the earlier building, and incorporated a stone circle in its three concentric rings of posts. A final phase, probably contemporary with the Avenue was the construction of an outer stone circle. No outer bank or ditch has been located. There has been speculation about the function of the site, and it is usually interpreted as semi-religious, and possibly was connected with mortuary rites.

The West Kennet Long Barrow is the largest stone chambered collective tomb in southern Britain. Dating from c.3250 B.C. it was in use for over a millennia, throughout the Neolithic period. The barrow consists of an earthen trapezoidal mound 100 m. in length with two parallel ditches at either side once 4 m. deep. At the east end there was a semi-circular forecourt or sarsen stones and inside 5 stone chambers used for successive interments of some 46 individuals. The chambers were constructed of large sarsen blocks set up as orthostats with cap stones. The tomb was closed by a very large sarsen stone, 4 m. high, and filling the forecourt.

Silbury Hill is the largest man-made hill of prehistoric Europe. Dating from c.2750 B.C. it stands 30 m high, covers 2 ha. and involved the quarrying and transportation of some 250000 cubic metres of soil and chalk. The system of building involved the construction of a series of stepped drums of chalk walls filled with silt. Excavation has endeavoured to discover the function of Silbury, but its original purpose remains obscure.

Windmill Hill is the earliest site of the Avebury complex, and is the type site of southern British 'causewayed camps'. Dating from c. 3700 B.C. the settlement consists of three concentric rings of interrupted ditches on the summit of Windmill Hill. Although there is little evidence for structures it is thought that the site represented the focus for scattered settlement in the area. The earliest pre-enclosure phases are dated from c.3700 to c. 3250 B.C. The causewayed enclosure covers an area of 8.5 ha. the outer ditch was 2.1 m. deep. Occupation of the site continued throughout the Neolithic period, and it was finally abandoned at the end of the third millennium B.C. during the Beaker period.

) Maps and/or plans

See Appendix A: List of maps and plans

) Photographic and/or cinematographic documentation.

See Appendix B: List of photographs
Appendix C: List of colour slides

) History

Stonehenge was first recorded in 1130 A.D. as one of the four wonders of Britain by Henry of Huntingdon. In 1136, Geoffrey of Monmouth mentioned it, and from that period until the 17th century, it was referred to in mythological terms. In 1620, the architect, Inigo Jones made a survey of the monument, which was later published in 1655. Charlton speculated that it was Danish in his 1663 book. More accurate work followed, with the survey by John Aubrey in 1663-66. From 1721-24, William Stukeley surveyed Stonehenge and undertook some excavation. He also noted many of the monuments around Stonehenge, such as the Cursus. Some years later, Stukeley began to speculate on the role of Druids at Stonehenge, and published 'Stonehenge' in 1740.

The first accurate plan of Stonehenge was made in 1812 by Colt Hoare and Cunnington following some excavation before 1810. Over the 19th century excavations and surveys continued. Much of the surrounding farmland came under the plough for the first time, and in 1880, Sir Flinders Petrie surveyed the site. From 1882, Stonehenge was protected by the Ancient Monuments act. Restoration and excavation took place in 1901, under the direction of Gowland. In 1913, Stonehenge was compulsorily scheduled, and protected against demolition or export. In 1915, the Stonehenge estate came on the market, was bought privately, before being sold to the nation in 1918.

From 1919-1926 the most destructive excavations were undertaken on behalf of the Society of Antiquaries, by Col. Hawley, prior to restoration of the leaning stones. Half the circle was excavated in this way. More recent excavations took place under the direction of Atkinson, Piggott and Stone in 1950, 1953-1963, and further restoration re-erected fallen stones. Subsequent work has involved rescue excavation around the monument.

Avebury was first recorded by John Aubrey in 1648. He made a detailed survey of the site, much of which was destroyed in the following decades. Between 1720-24, William Stukeley recorded the destruction of many of the stones, and surveyed surrounding sites prior to damage and destruction throughout the 18th and 19th centuries. In 1865 local antiquaries excavated within the circle. Lord Avebury bought much of the Circle in 1872 to forestall further building. Excavations from 1908-1922 by H. St. George Gray and from 1934-1939 by A. Keiller have both confirmed the existence of the construction, the general dating of the site, and its destruction during the Medieval and post Medieval periods. Excavations of Windmill Hill took place first under the direction of Gray (1925-27) and then under Keiller (1927-29). The site had long been known as a rich hunting ground for flint artefacts. By 1937, Keiller had bought the site and opened it to the public. Further excavation took place under I. Smith in 1957. The site together with the Great Circle and the reconstructed part of the West Kennet Avenue came into National Trust ownership in 1942, and are under the Guardianship of HBMC. Silbury Hill has undergone numerous excavations. First in 1776-7, then 1849, 1867, 1886, and most recently 1967-70. The site has been under State guardianship since 1883. The West Kennet Long Barrow was recorded by Aubrey and Stukeley. It was plundered for human bones and soil during the 17th and 18th centuries. In 1867, Dr Thurnam excavated the western chamber of the barrow. Complete excavation of the other stone chambers by Atkinson and Piggott took place between 1954-55. The earthen mound remains unexcavated. The West Kennet Long Barrow has been protected as a scheduled monument since 1883 and has been under guardianship since 1883.

:)Bibliography.

Stonehenge

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Avebury

- Burl. A. 1979 Prehistoric Avebury.
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- Piggott S. 1962 The West Kennett Long Barrow.
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- Smith I. 1965 Windmill Hill and Avebury, Oxford.
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4. State of preservation/ conservation.

a) Diagnosis Stonehenge.

Condition is generally good, but heavy visitor numbers have led to restricted entry to the stone circle.

Avebury

Circle and majority of Avebury Village under ownership of National Trust. The Four sectors of the circle are presently under pasture, and let as grazing. The condition is good. The public can enter most parts of the circle unrestricted.

b) Agent responsible for preservation/ conservation.

Both sites are under the guardianship of the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England. This body carries out necessary conservation of the sites. The National Trust for England owns the circle of Avebury, and much of the land surrounding Stonehenge, and is responsible for the remainder as Scheduled Ancient Monuments.

c) History of Stonehenge preservation/ conservation.

Many stones have been straightened or re-erected since 1900, and a large part of the site has been excavated. Some of the surrounding henge ditch has been cleaned. Future work will involve the conservation of the surrounding landscape and monuments, and the re-routing of road, paths, the provision of car-parks, shops etc.

Avebury

Part of the circle was purchased by Lord Avebury in 1872 to prevent building. A. Keiller purchased the whole circle in 1934 and proceeded to excavate and re-erect many of the destroyed or buried stones. The site was purchased through public subscription and given to the National Trust in 1942, when it also came into State guardianship. Over half the site remains unexcavated.

d) means for preservation/ conservation

Stonehenge and Avebury Circle and the associated sites in State care are maintained and financed by Central Government through the Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Commission. The National Trust for England also has responsibilities for maintaining and financing its properties within the area.

ment plans

Stonehenge

The every growing popularity of this monument has produced complex problems of management and presentation. Existing arrangements which include a car park, light refreshment and toilets, explanatory notices and guidebooks are currently under intensive review and it is hoped to produce major improvements within the next few years.

Avebury

Existing arrangements which include car parks, toilets, a shop and museum are adequate and no major alteration is currently contemplated.

General

There are no relevant plans for local development with any implications for either property other than those referred to above.

fication for
sion in the
Heritage List.

tural property.

Stonehenge and Avebury are the two most important and characteristic prehistoric monuments in Britain. They represent the Henge monument par excellence, as the largest, most evolved and best-preserved prehistoric temples of a type unique to Britain. Together with the associated sites and monuments they provide a landscape without parallel in Britain or elsewhere and provide an unrivalled demonstration of human achievement in prehistoric times.

APPENDIX A. LIST OF MAPS AND PLANS.

1. Location map, England.
2. Location of Avebury and Stonehenge.
3. Stonehenge and associated monuments.
4. Plan of Stonehenge.
5. Avebury and associated monuments.
6. Avebury Henge Monument and West Kennet Avenue.

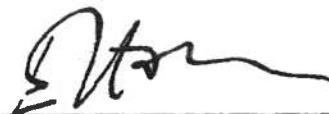
APPENDIX B. LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

1. Stonehenge from the air.
2. Stonehenge from the east.
3. The central area of the circle.
4. Avebury from the air.
5. Stone circle.
6. West Kennet (Kennett) Long Barrow from the air
7. Interior of West Kennet Long Barrow.
8. Windmill Hill.
9. Silbury Hill.

APPENDIX C. LIST OF COLOUR SLIDES

1. Stonehenge from the air.
 2. Stonehenge from the west.
 3. Stonehenge from the south-west.
 4. Avebury from the air.
 5. Avebury stone circle.
 6. Silbury Hill.
 7. Interior of West Kennet Long Barrow.
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Signed (on behalf of State party)

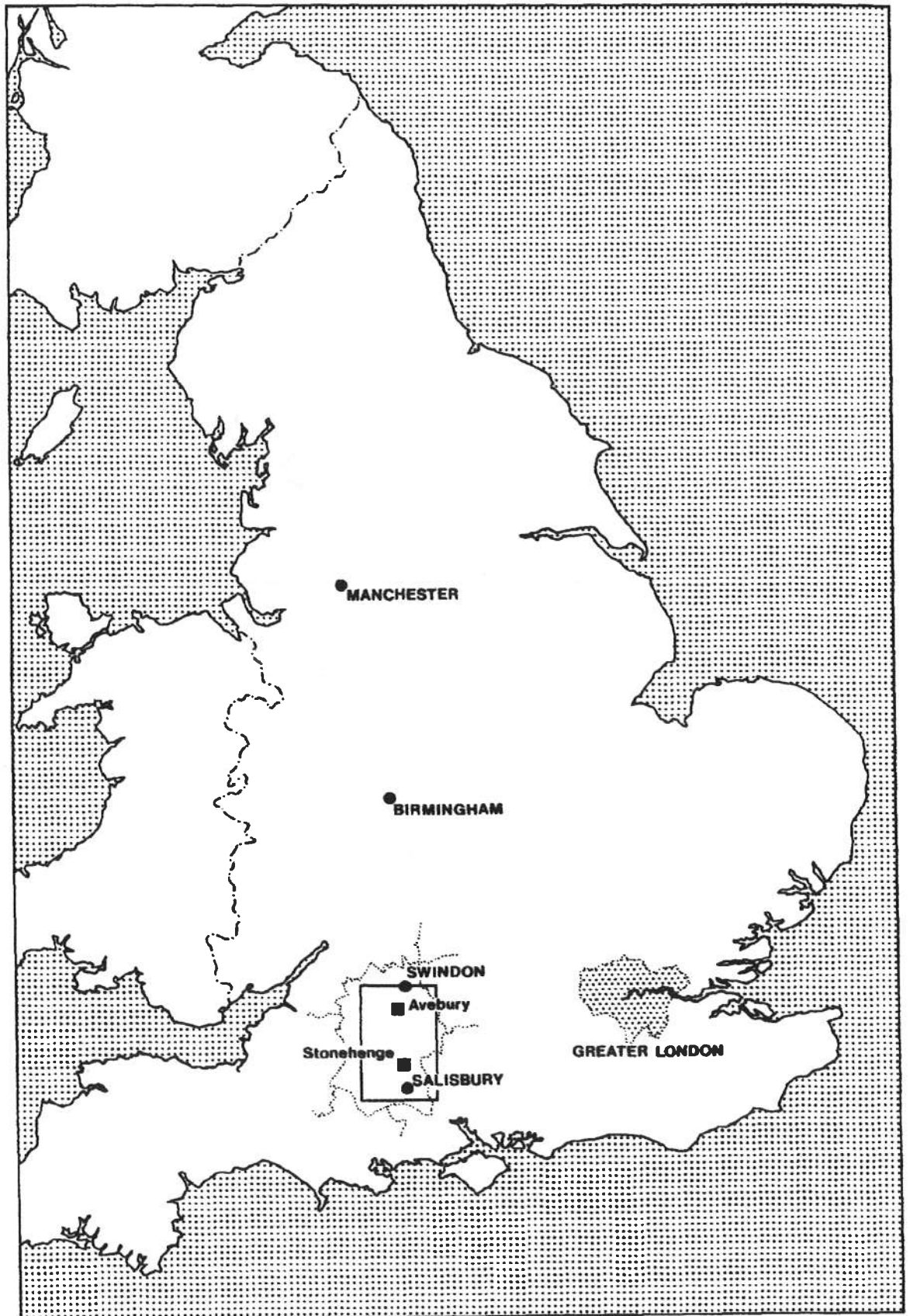


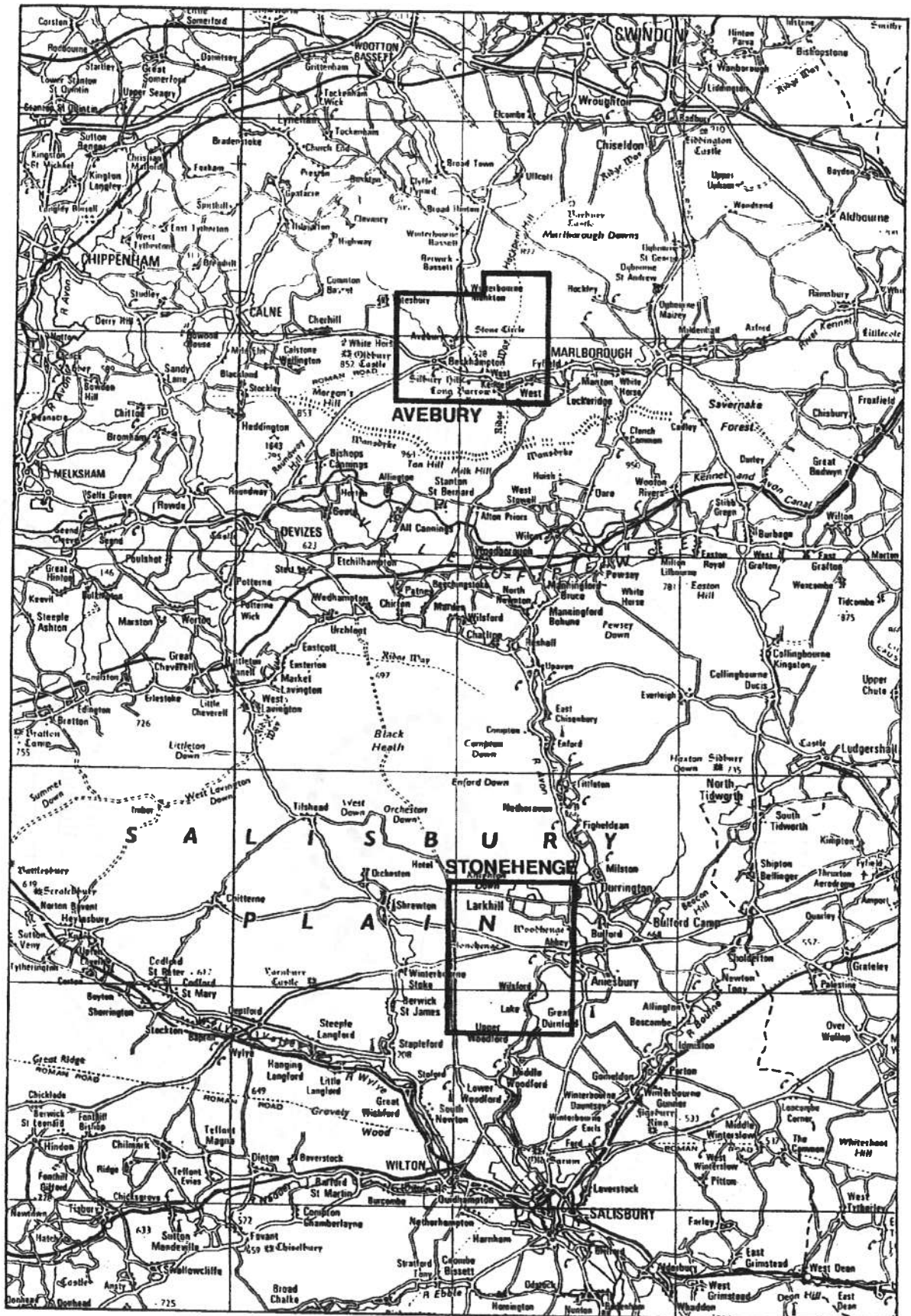
Full name The Lord Elton

Title Minister of State

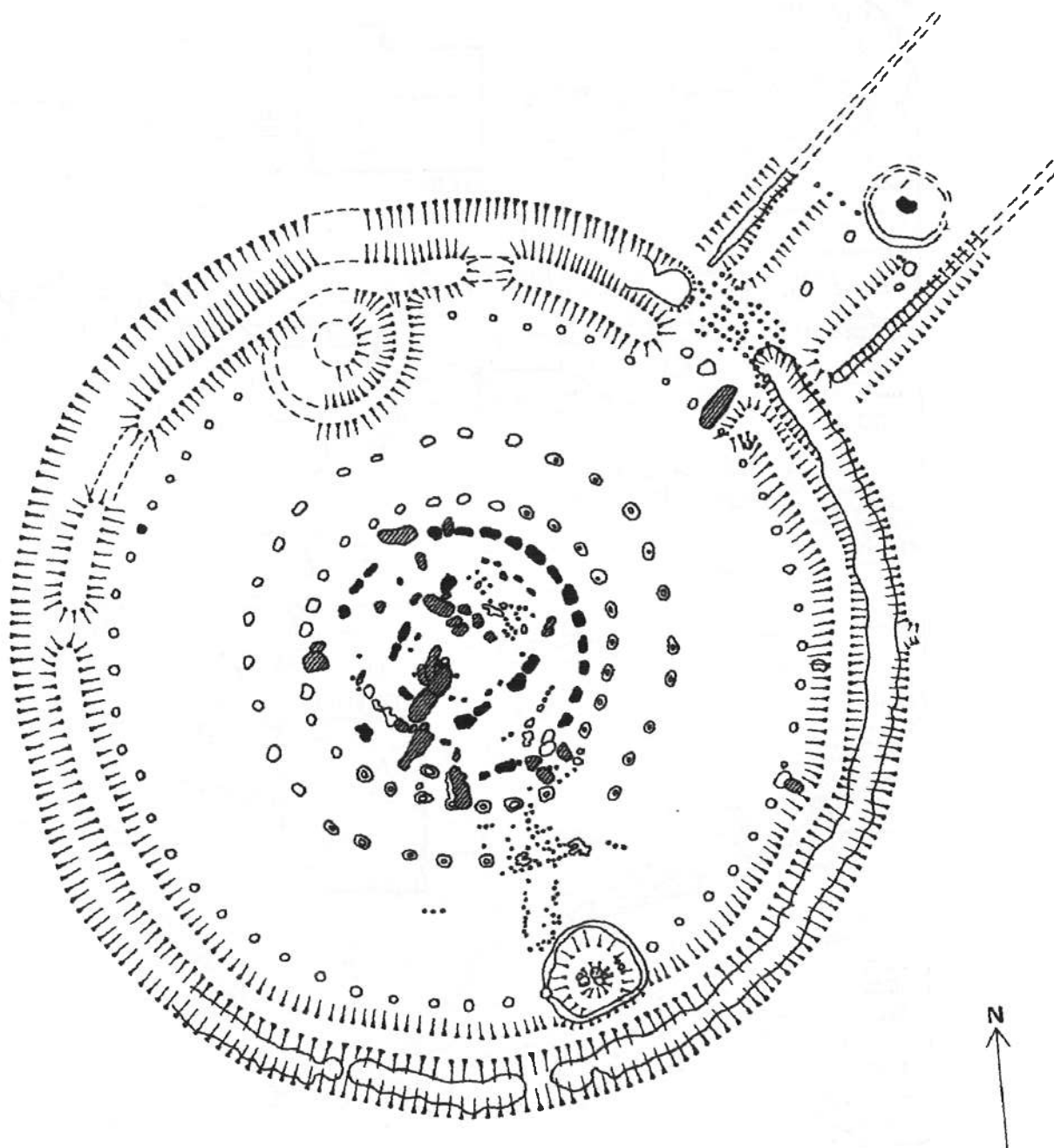
Department of the Environment

Date December 1985







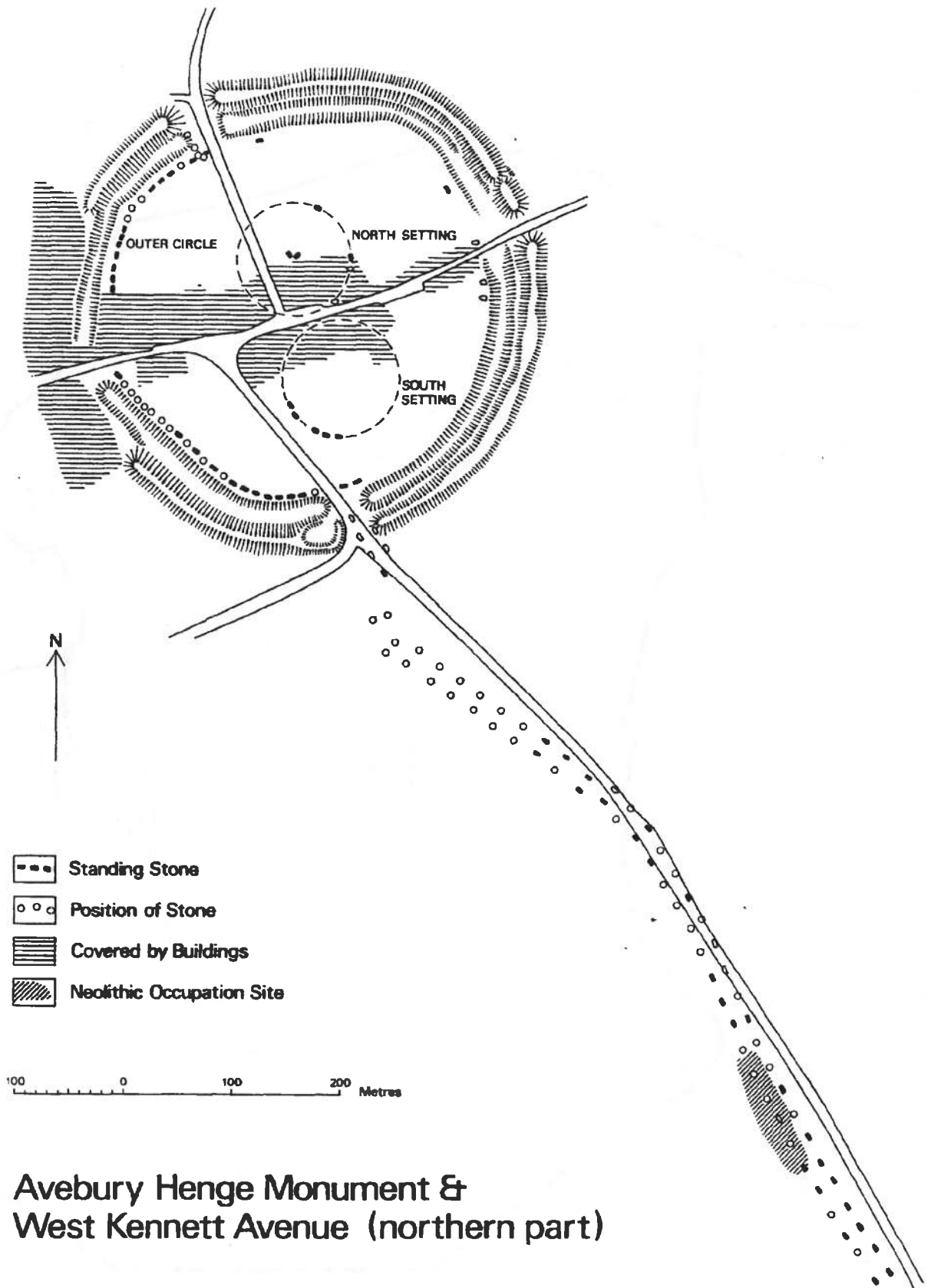
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STONEHENGE



- Standing Stone 
- Fallen Stone 

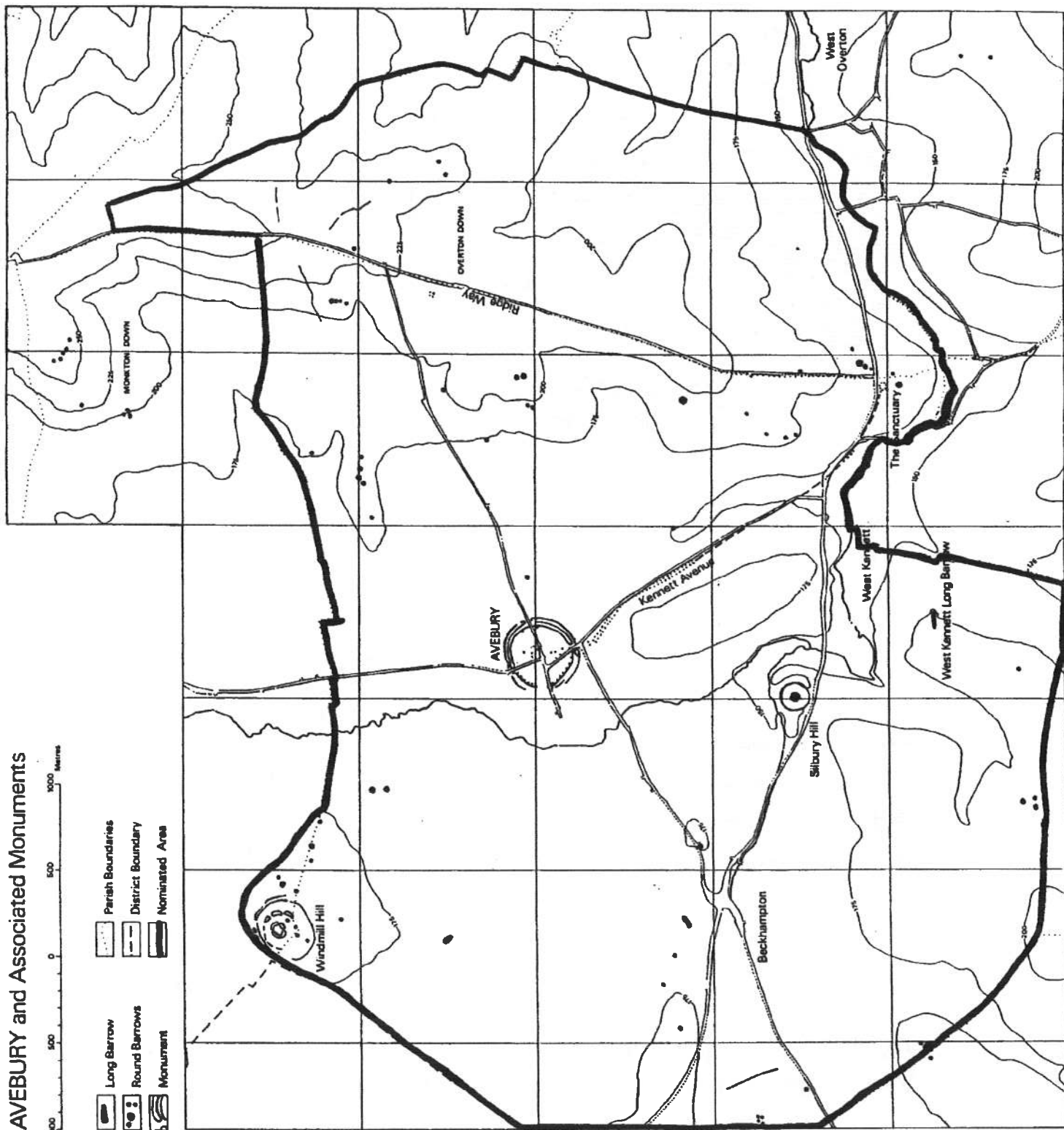


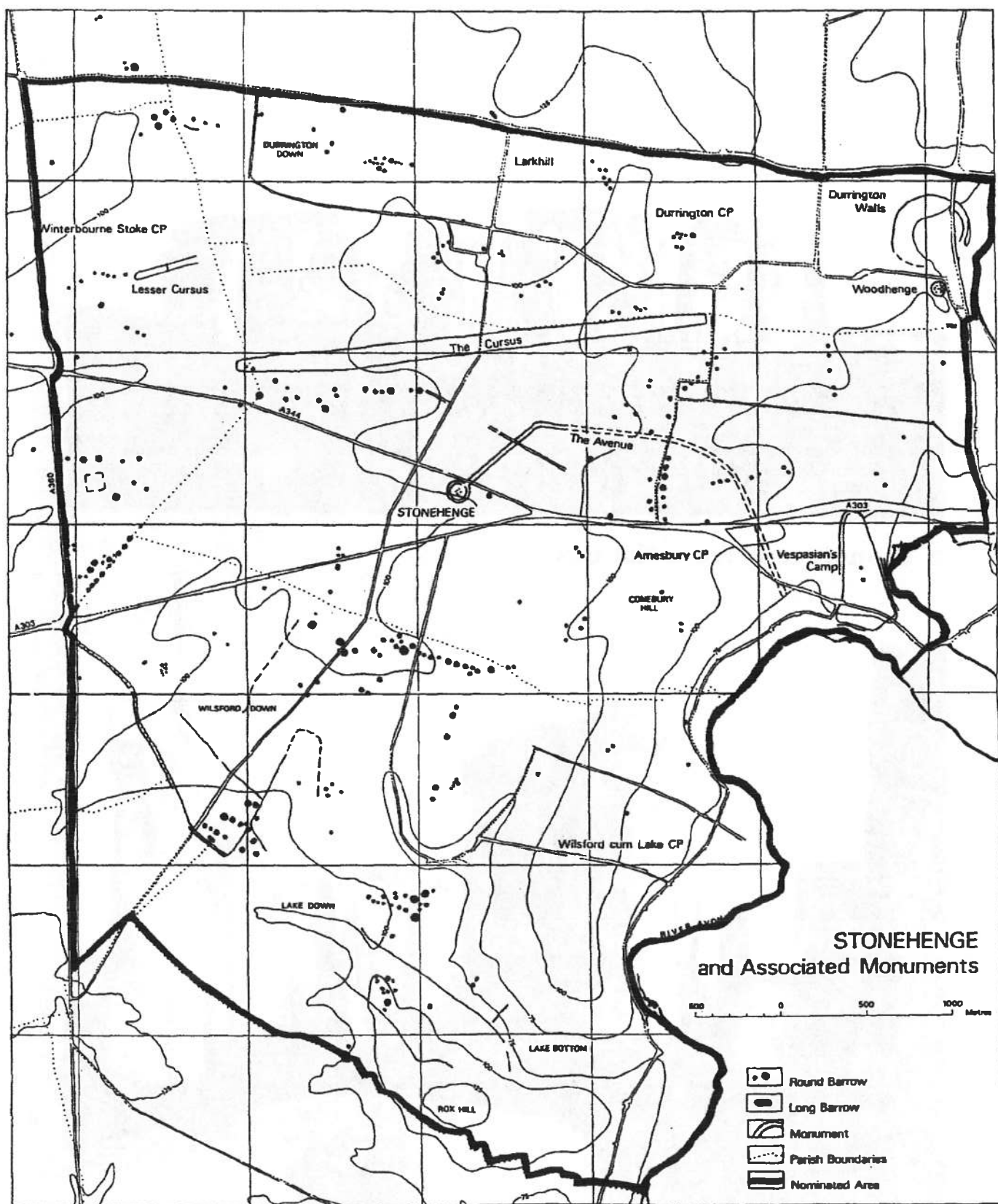
**Avebury Henge Monument &
West Kennett Avenue (northern part)**

AVEBURY and Associated Monuments



- Long Barrow
- Round Barrows
- Monument
- Parish Boundary
- District Boundary
- Nominated Area







2. Stonehenge from the east



3. The central area

ICOMOS

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL ON MONUMENTS AND SITES
CONSEIL INTERNATIONAL DES MONUMENTS ET DES SITES
CONSEJO INTERNACIONAL DE MONUMENTOS Y SITIOS
МЕЖДУНАРОДНЫЙ СОВЕТ ПО ВОПРОСАМ ПАМЯТНИКОВ И ДОСТОПРИМЕЧАТЕЛЬНЫХ МЕСТ

WORLD HERITAGE LIST

N° 373

A) IDENTIFICATION

Nomination: Stonehenge, Avebury and Related Sites

Location: Wiltshire

State Party: United Kingdom

Date: December 24, 1985

B) ICOMOS RECOMMENDATION

That the proposed cultural property be included on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria I and III and ultimately criterion II.

C) JUSTIFICATION

Of the hundreds of circular megalithic ensembles which are characteristic of the neolithic civilisation in Britain, the best known are unquestionably those of Stonehenge and Avebury (Wiltshire). The UK government is nominating them for inclusion on the World Heritage List along with a number of satellite sites located very near Stonehenge and Avebury which enable us to better understand the more famous sites by situating them in a broader context.

Stonehenge, which was built in several distinct phases from 3100 to 1100 B.C., is one of the most impressive megalithic monuments in the world on account of the sheer size of the menhirs (some of the blocks weigh 50 tonnes) and especially the perfection of the plan, which is based upon a series of concentric circles, and also because of its height: from the third phase of construction on, large lintels were placed upon the vertical blocks, thereby creating a type of bonded entablature. The architectural qualities are highlighted by the use of two different materials: irregular sandstone blocks known as Sarsen, quarried in a plain near Salisbury and blue stones quarried about 200 kilometers away in Pembroke County.

An avenue with a bend in it running roughly from east to west was built between ca. 2100 and 1100. It leads to and away from the exterior circle in the northeast quarter. Although the ritual function of the monument is not known in detail, the cosmic references of its structure appear to be essential. The apparent point of sunrise at the winter and summer solstices provide obvious reference marks.

The old theory which stated that the site was a sanctuary for worship of the sun, though not the subject of unanimous agreement among prehistorians, is nevertheless illustrated by the yearly Midsummer Day ceremony during which there is a folkloric procession of bards and druids at Stonehenge.

In the immediate surroundings of this exceptional site several settlement areas, burial grounds and large circular ensembles of earth and wood discovered at Woodhenge and Durrington Walls make it possible to expand our knowledge regarding the use of inhabited space from the neolithic period to the Bronze Age and to recognize the exceptional ritualistic value of this area.

Avebury (about 30 kilometers to the north), though not so well known as Stonehenge, is nevertheless Europe's largest circular megalithic ensemble. Its exterior circle comprising some 100 menhirs covers a perimeter of 1.3 kilometers and also has two tangent circumferences within the large circle. In all, 180 standing stones were put into place before the beginning of the 3rd millenium B.C., as demonstrated by abundant ceramic samples found on the site.

There are four avenues (of which only the south one, West Kennet Avenue, is still lined with megaliths) leading to the four cardinal points of the "sanctuary" which has undergone substantial deterioration since William Stukeley's description in the 18th century.

Not far from Avebury are a number of sites which have been inventoried and which for the most part have already been excavated. They testify to the fact that during the neolithic era, this zone was every bit as important as Stonehenge. Among these satellite sites, several are worthy of mention such as Silbury Hill where Europe's largest known barrow of prehistoric times is located (250,000 cubic meters of earth and chalk heaped together), as well as Windmill Hill, West Kennet Long Barrow and Overton Hill.

This nomination for the inclusion of the Wiltshire megalithic sites, which has been expected for several years now, concerns one of the most obvious potential choices for inclusion on the World Heritage List and cannot help but meet with the enthusiastic approval of ICOMOS, which recommends the inclusion of the cultural property thus defined on the basis of criteria I and III and ultimately criterion II. In this connection ICOMOS would like to recall that already in the 12th century Stonehenge was considered as one of the wonders of the world by the chroniclers Henry de Huntington and Geoffrey de Monmouth and that in the 17thn century, Stonehenge was the focus of a study by the great architect Inigo Jones.

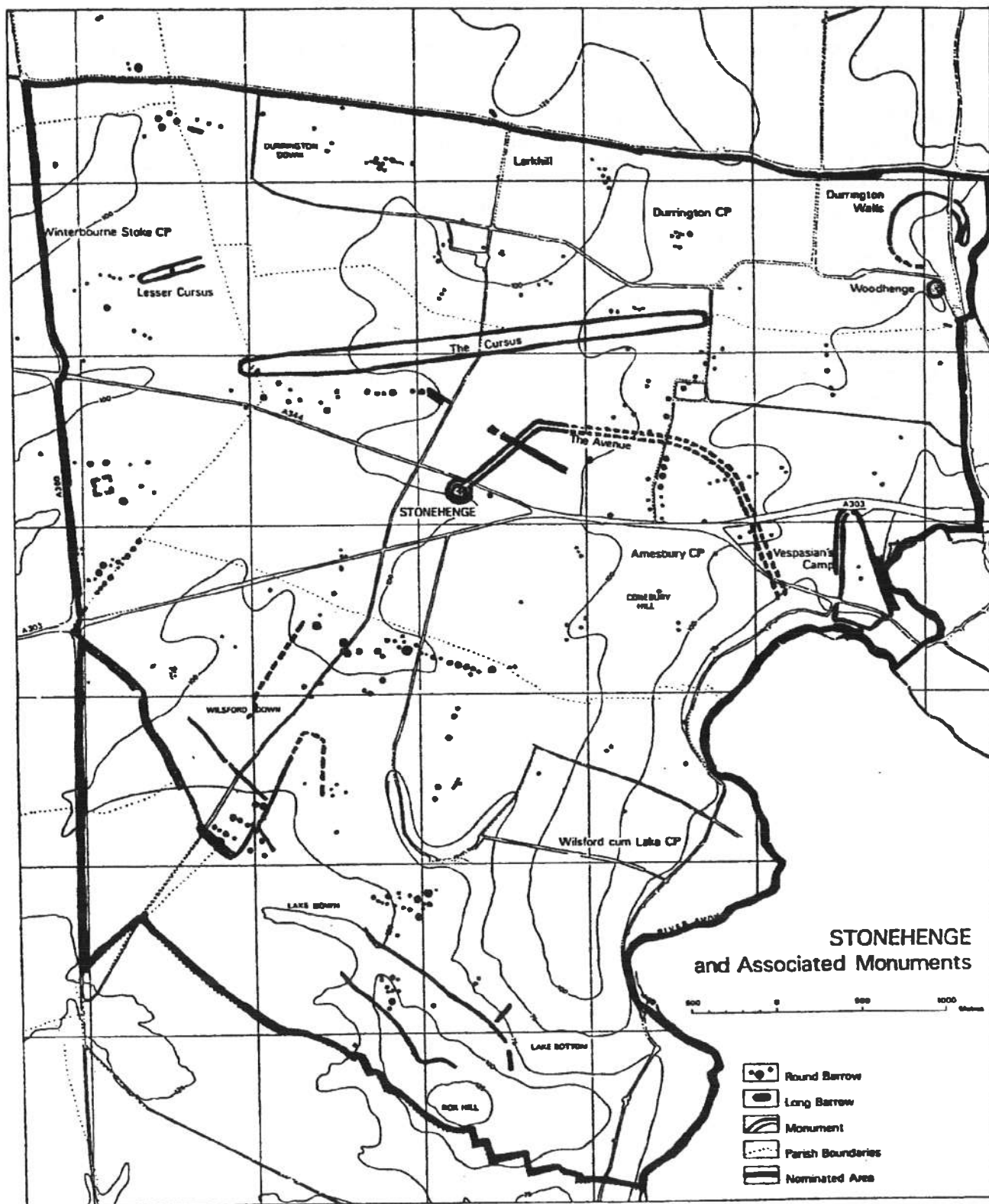
The early and unwavering interest for this megalithic ensemble

which serves as a benchmark, has left its mark upon historiography, the evolution of architectural theories and the progress of prehistoric sciences.

Although ICOMOS congratulates the United Kingdom on the highly satisfactory definition of the protection areas of Stonehenge, Avebury and the related sites, it would like to take the opportunity of their inclusion to join in the reservations expressed by the HBMC (Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission) in its 1985 report on the developments of these sites for purposes of tourism.

The A344 road (which abruptly cuts off the Stonehenge access avenue) must necessarily be re-routed before conducting any development studies. Light equipment alone can, in the medium term, guarantee the preservation of these two major Wiltshire sites and their surroundings.

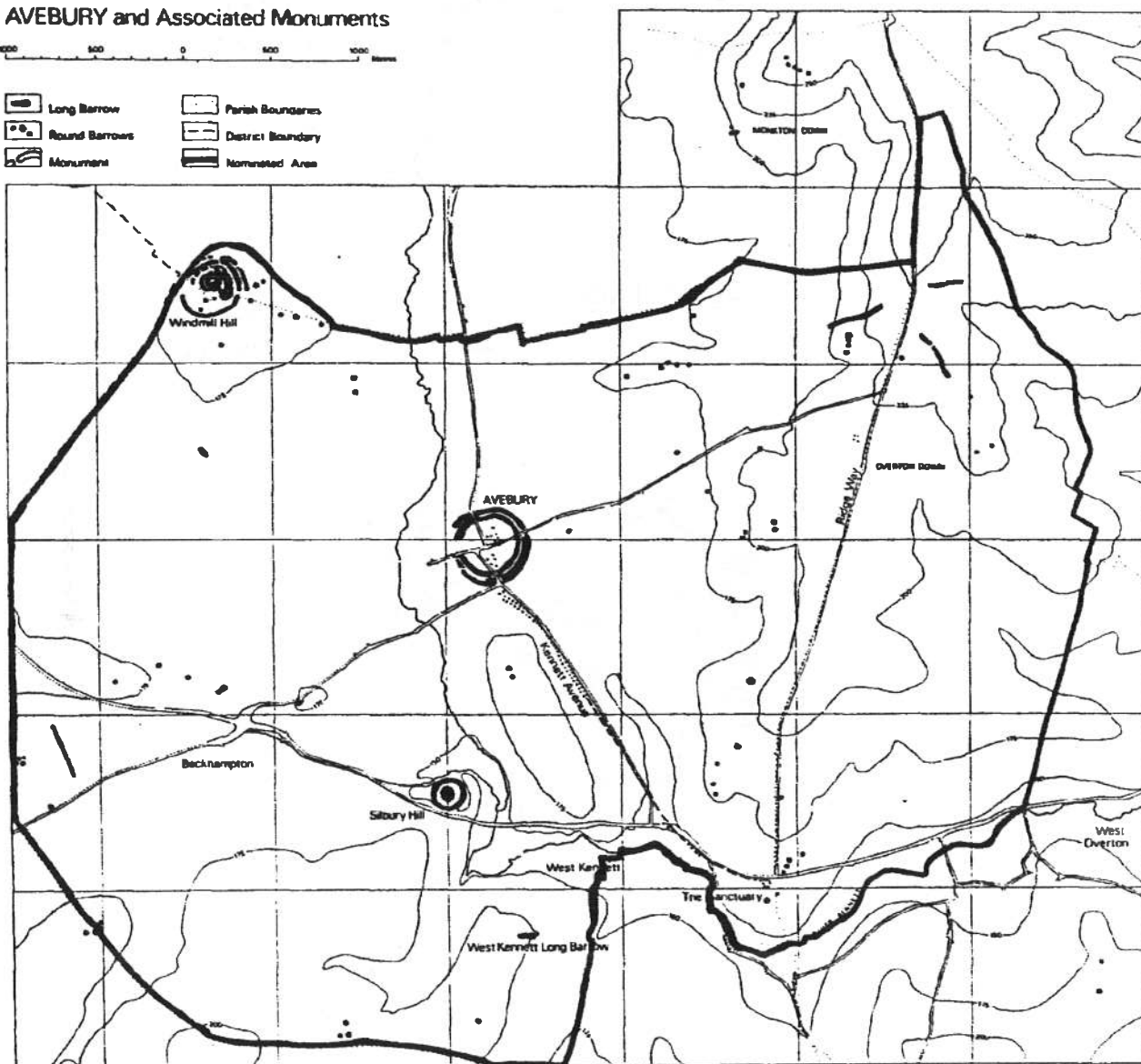
ICOMOS, April 1986.

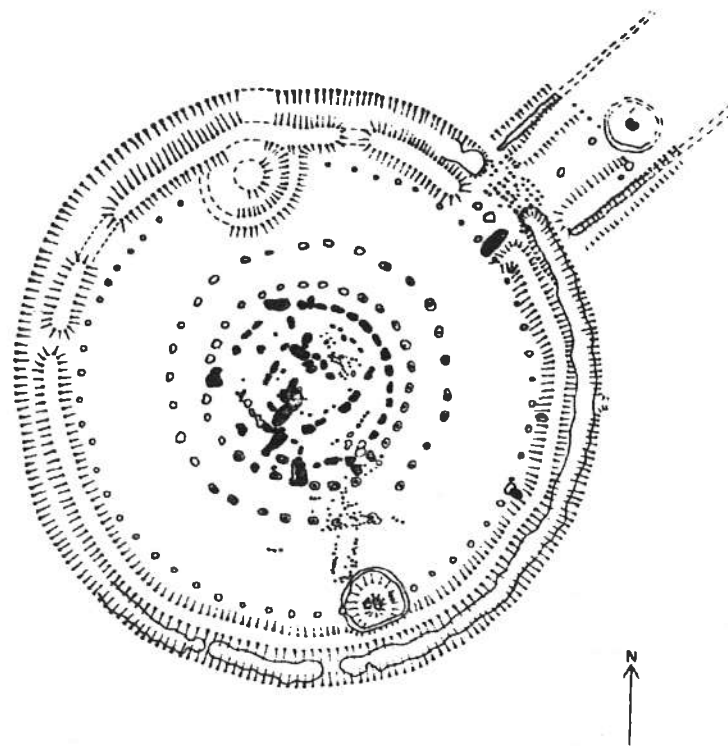


AVEBURY and Associated Monuments

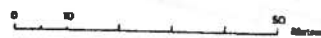
1000 500 0 500 1000 Metres

- | | |
|---|---|
|  Long Barrow |  Parish Boundaries |
|  Round Barrows |  District Boundary |
|  Monument |  Nominated Area |

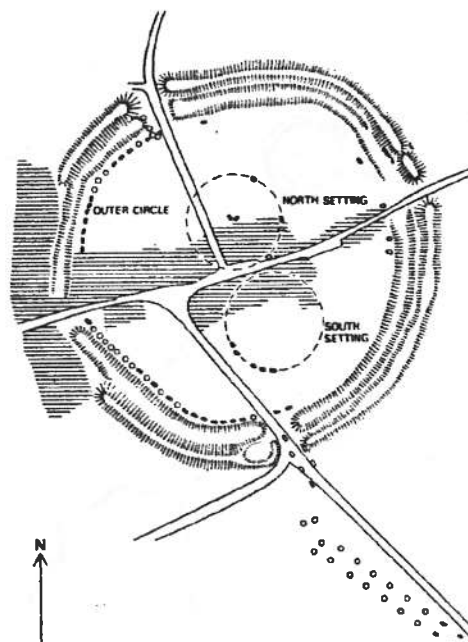




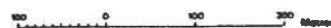
STONEHENGE



- Standing Stone
- Fallen Stone



- Standing Stone
- Position of Stone
- Covered by Buildings
- Neolithic Occupation Site



Avebury Henge Monument & West Kennett Avenue (northern part)