

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.

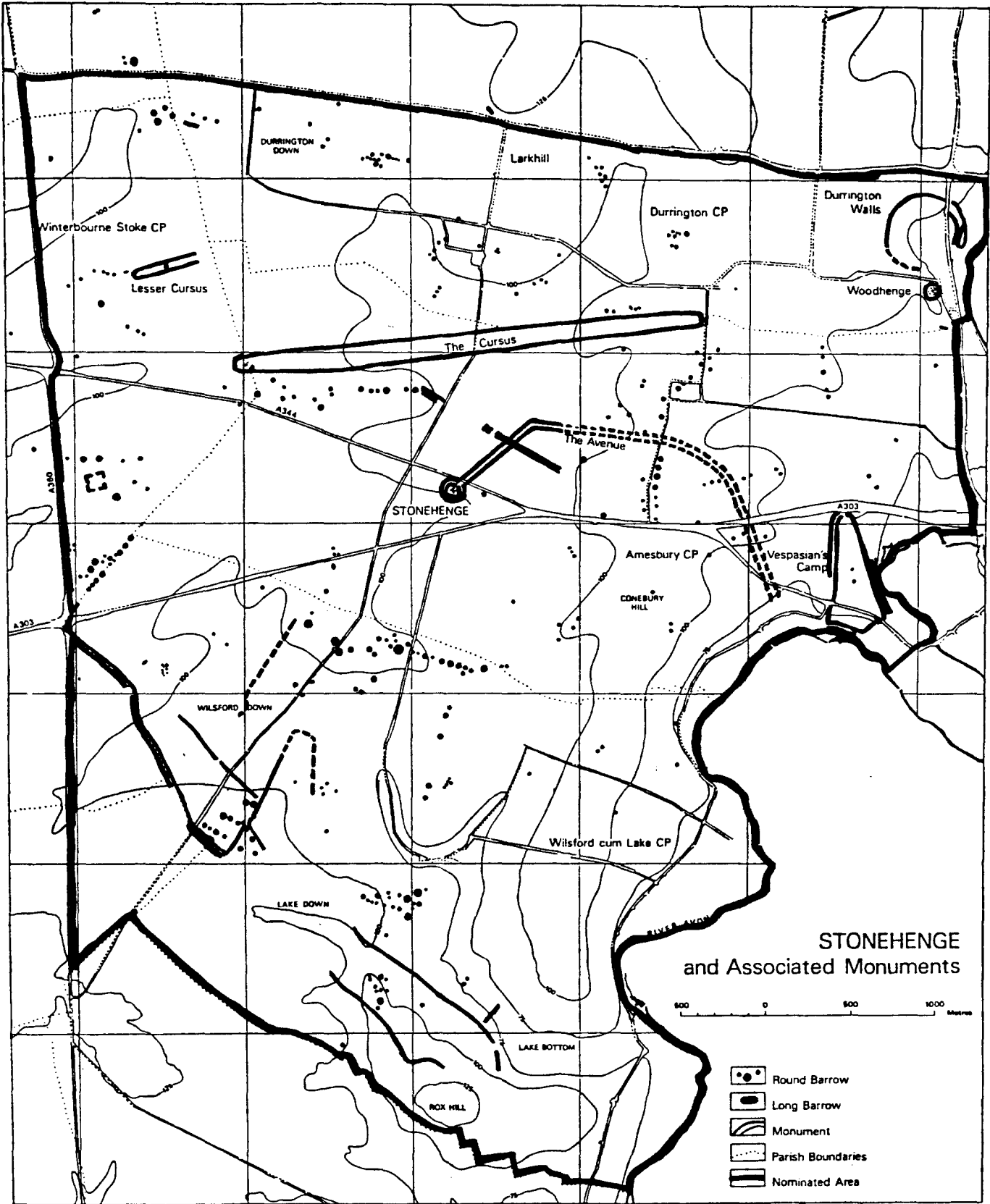
The early and unwavering interest for this megalithic ensemble

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.

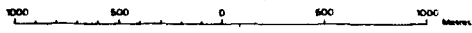


**STONEHENGE
and Associated Monuments**

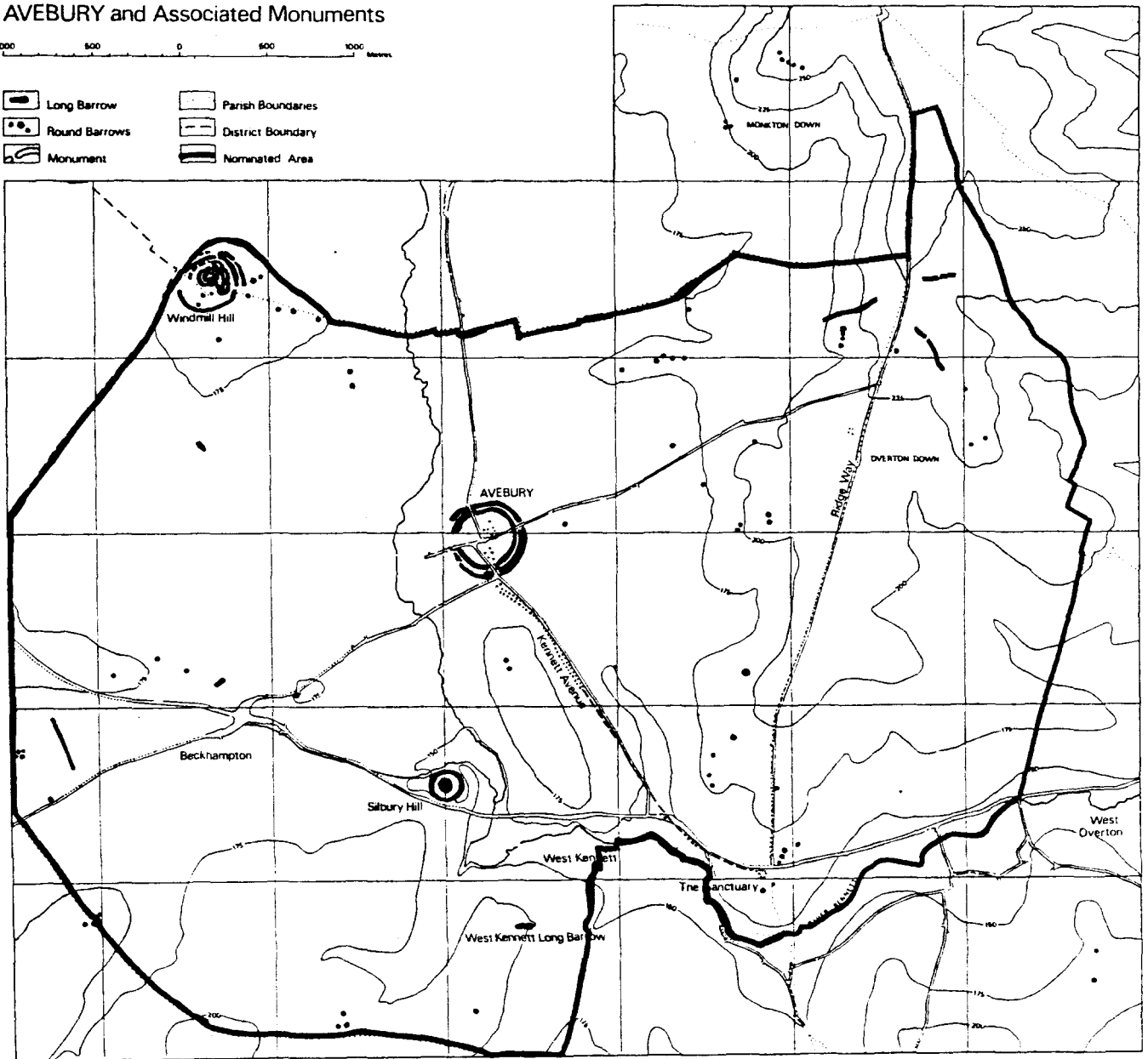
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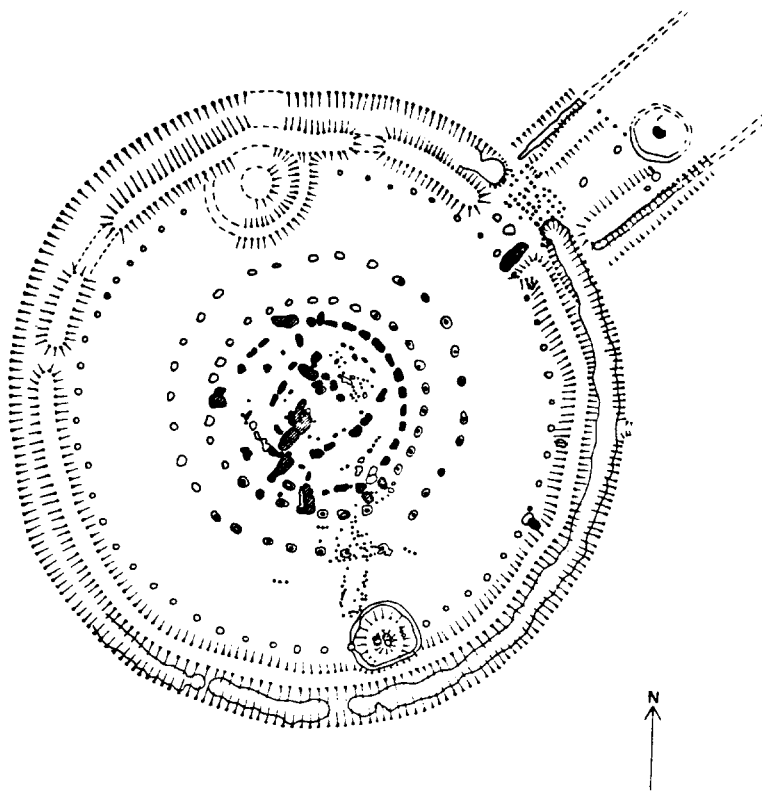
-  Round Barrow
-  Long Barrow
-  Monument
-  Parish Boundaries
-  Nominated Area

AVEBURY and Associated Monuments

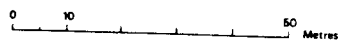


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|--|---------------|--|-------------------|
| | Long Barrow | | Parish Boundaries |
| | Round Barrows | | District Boundary |
| | Monument | | Nominated Area |

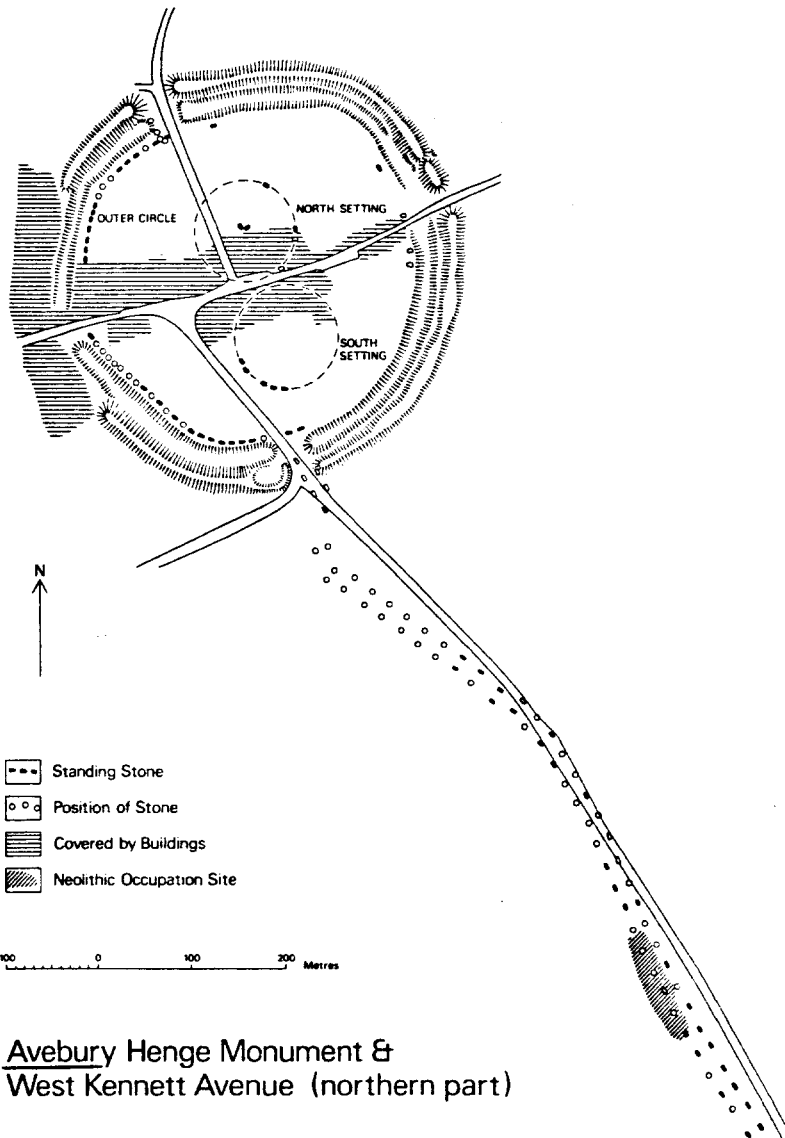




STONEHENGE



- Standing Stone
- Fallen Stone



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



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