



# Stonebarrow Hill to Westhay Farm, Stanton St Gabriel, Dorset Observation and Recording during Water Supply Replacement



Report No. 53527/3/1

June 2019



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May 2019

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1	Draft	M Trevarthen		23/06/2019
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3				

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## Project Report Summary Page

Project Details			
<b>OASIS Reference</b>	terraina1-353685 & terraina1-357246		
<b>Project Title</b>	Stonebarrow Hill to Westhay Farm replacement water supply		
<b>Short Description of Project</b>	Terrain Archaeology undertook archaeological observations and recording during the installation of a replacement domestic water supply from Stonebarrow Hill to Westhay Farm, Stanton Gabriel, Dorset in May 2019. No archaeologically significant features or deposits were encountered. Archaeological finds were limited to a single struck flint flake, found in the southern part of the pipe route.		
<b>Project Dates</b>	Start: 14-05-2019	End: 17-05-2019	
<b>Previous/Future Work</b>	No/No		
<b>Project Code</b>	53527		
<b>Monument Type and Period</b>	None		
<b>Significant Finds</b>	Flake (Late Prehistoric)		
Project Location			
<b>County/District/Parish</b>	Dorset/ West Dorset/ Stanton St Gabriel		
<b>Site Address</b>	Stonebarrow Hill to Westhay Farm DT6 6SD		
<b>Site Coordinates</b>	SY 38235 93160 to SY 38324 92950		
<b>Site Area</b>	c. 135 m <sup>2</sup>		
<b>Height OD</b>			
Project Creators			
<b>Organisation</b>	Terrain Archaeology		
<b>Project Brief Originator</b>	Martin Papworth, National Trust Regional Archaeologist (Wessex)		
<b>Project Design Originator</b>	Terrain Archaeology		
<b>Project Supervisor</b>	Mike Trevarthen		
<b>Project Manager</b>	Peter Bellamy		
<b>Sponsor or Funding Body</b>	The National Trust		
Project Archive			
<b>Archive Type</b>	<b>Physical</b>	<b>Digital</b>	<b>Paper</b>
<b>Location/Accession No</b>	National Trust	National Trust	National Trust
<b>Contents</b>	Flint	Digital photography	diary, plan, report

# Stonebarrow Hill to Westhay Farm, Stanton St Gabriel, Dorset

## Observation and Recording during Water Supply Replacement, May 2019

### 1. Introduction

#### 1.1 Project introduction

Terrain Archaeology was commissioned by the National Trust to carry out a programme of archaeological observations and recording (a 'watching brief') during the installation of a replacement domestic water supply between Stonebarrow Hill and Westhay Farm within the National Trust's Golden Cap estate. The work was undertaken in response to a requirement from the National Trust's Regional Archaeologist.

The fieldwork was carried out between the 14th and 17th May 2019 by Mike Trevarthen.

#### 1.2 Brief

No written brief for the scheme of works was issued.

#### 1.3 Site Location and Topography

The route of the new water supply lay entirely within the National Trust's Golden Cap estate (Figure 1). Its northern part traversed the moderately steep southern slope of Stonebarrow Hill, beginning at OS NGR SY 38235 93160 and initially following an unmarked pathway, then an unpaved trackway as far as the concrete access lane to Westhay Farm. South of the access lane it followed the western edge of a more gently south-sloping meadow immediately north of Westhay Farm, terminating in an agricultural gateway near the north end of Westhay Farm Barn at SY 38324 92950 (Figure 2).

#### 1.4 Geology

The solid geology of the area is relatively complex. The upper part of Stonebarrow hill comprises Upper Greensand formation, but at lower elevations the pipe route also crossed (successively) Gault Mudstone, Downcliffe Sand Member/Thorncombe Sand Member, and possibly Eype Clay at its southernmost end (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>). No superficial drift deposits are mapped, but the uppermost part of the trench cut through brecciated flint plateau gravel, and all other parts of the route exposed Head deposits rather than *in situ* bedrock.

#### 1.5 Archaeological and Historical Background

The archaeological and historical background of the Golden Cap Estate is set out in the National Trust's Historic Landscape Survey (Papworth 2000), from which the following has been extracted.

Prehistoric and Romano-British evidence is limited to finds from coastal cliff falls or linked to excavations of sites threatened by coastal erosion, together with a very sparse scatter of flint further inland. Mesolithic and Neolithic flint tools have been found at Thorncombe Beacon, environmental samples from Early Bronze Age burial mounds at Golden Cap, Middle Bronze Age pottery from Doghouse Hill and a scattering of Iron Age and Romano-British pottery from Broom Cliff and from Thorncombe Beacon. The road across Stonebarrow Hill has been suggested as being part of the Roman road from Dorchester to Exeter.

The lack of finds may indicate that the area is thinly settled, but the concentration of finds revealed by coastal erosion indicates the possibility that sites may be hidden under pasture fields and await discovery. However, previous watching briefs by Terrain Archaeology across the estate have suggested relatively sparse evidence for prehistoric and Roman activity (Terrain Archaeology 2006 and 2011).

Stanton St Gabriel is recorded in the Domesday survey and subsequent medieval documents indicate that the division of the landscape into scattered small farmsteads took place early. St Gabriel's is the principle and largest farm close to the chapel but apparently never the centre of a nucleated settlement and never a parish, the minster of Whitchurch Canonicorum remained the mother church for this area. Evidence from Domesday Book and from excavations at St Gabriel's indicates that the fields were heavily ploughed in the medieval period.

The farmsteads had various owners and changed hands many times. The tithe map of 1840 is the first opportunity to examine ownership and occupation across the area but the indication from hedge boundaries and ownership linked to surviving documents is that the field pattern has an ancient origin dating back to the medieval and perhaps in some cases pre-medieval periods.

## 1.6 Previous Archaeological fieldwork

There have been no archaeological investigations in the close environs of the pipe trench. However, a series of access pits and short lengths of machine-excavated trench were monitored during the installation of a gas main replacement alongside Stonebarrow Lane and the National Trust car park north of the site (Terrain Archaeology 2011). No archaeology was recorded. This area was also monitored during trenching for a new water supply in 2005 and again no archaeology was observed (Terrain Archaeology 2006).

## 1.7 Aims and Objectives

The aim of the Archaeological Observations and Recording was to establish and make available information about the archaeological resource existing on the site.

Its objectives were:

- To observe and record all the *in situ* archaeological deposits and features revealed during the groundworks to an appropriate professional standard.
- To present the results in a report to the appropriate standard.

## 1.8 Groundworks

Excavation of the pipe trench was carried out using a rubber-tracked mini-excavator, usually using a toothed bucket (the work would not have been feasible using a toothless bucket) producing a trench 0.4 m wide and up to 0.8 m deep. Arisings from the trench were stored adjacent to the trench edge (Plates 1–3). All areas of work were publicly accessible and trenching was carried out in discrete lengths, with pipe laying and backfilling completed for the close of each day.

## 1.9 Methods

The observation and recording of the groundworks was undertaken to the standards of the Chartered Institute of Archaeologists (CIfA 2014a), with an archaeologist in attendance during all groundworks likely to expose archaeological evidence.

Deposit sequences exposed by the trenching were recorded using elements of Terrain Archaeology's suite of *pro-formae* written and graphic record sheets. A digital photographic record was maintained throughout the work, recording aspects of its setting, conduct and technical detail.

## 1.10 Archive and Dissemination

### 1.10.1 Paper Archive

The project archive, comprising written, graphic and photographic records, and appropriate background documentation, has been compiled in a stable, cross-referenced and fully indexed archive in accordance with current



guidelines (Brown 2011; ClfA 2014b) and the requirements of the National Trust. It is currently stored by Terrain Archaeology under the project code 53527. In due course, the archive will be accessioned for long-term curation and storage by the National Trust.

### 1.10.2 Artefacts

A single flint flake was recovered from the fieldwork. This will be submitted to the National Trust for long-term curation and storage.

### 1.10.3 Report

A copy of this report will be lodged with the National Trust Sites and Monuments Record and with Dorset Historic Environment Record (HER). The HER is a publicly funded and accessible resource, and deposition of the report will place it, and the project results, in the public domain.

A digital summary of the archive will be placed with the OASIS project ([www.oasis.ac.uk](http://www.oasis.ac.uk)) under the reference code *terrains1-353685* and *terrains1-357246*. A digital copy of this report will be uploaded for inclusion in the Archaeological Data Service (ADS) online 'grey literature' library.

## 2. Results

### 2.1 Deposit Sequence

Trenching along the pipe-route revealed a consistent sequence of stony topsoil or agricultural soil over variably-composed stony- to coarse rubbly subsoil (Head deposits).

#### 2.1.1 Stonebarrow Hill north of the Westhay Farm access track

0.00 – 0.50m **Developed/colluvial soil:** Grass or coarse scrub vegetation over moderately loose, uncompacted mid grey-brown sandy silt; humic (becoming weakly humic with depth) in its upper part. Moderate to common poorly-sorted greensand chert and occasional brecciated flint.

0.50m+ **Head deposits:** Poorly-sorted brecciated flint gravel at highest part of pipe-route; remainder of route comprised light orange-brown sandy clay-loam with patchy but generally very abundant poorly-sorted angular greensand chert rubble

#### 2.1.2 Meadow south of the Westhay Farm access track

0.00 – 0.50m **Agricultural soil:** Moderately firm mid grey-brown sandy silt, common small (scarce larger) angular greensand chert and occasional brecciated flint.

0.50m+ **Head deposits:** Firm yellowish-brown sandy clay-silt with abundant small brecciated greensand chert and occasional brecciated flint. Further downslope, several broad bands or drifts containing very abundant coarse angular greensand chert rubble were encountered

## 3. Finds

### 3.1 Finds Assemblage

The only find of archaeological significance was a single thick secondary flint flake (37g) recovered unstratified from excavated spoil in the central part of the meadow (see Figure 2 for find spot). The flake retains some worn cortex on its dorsal surface and is unpatinated with semi-gloss surfaces. It has some post-depositional edge-damage or crude irregular retouch on one margin.

## 4. Discussion and Conclusions

### 4.1 Discussion

Observation of the trenching works has confirmed that no significant and identifiable archaeological features or deposits were present along the pipe-route. The single flint flake recovered from the more gently sloping southern part of the route is broadly indicative of human activity in the locality, but appears to represent no more than a casual loss or discard of a single item. This work has provided additional evidence for the generally sparse archaeological activity in this area, confirming the impression that this area was marginal and was not densely settled.

### 4.2 Conclusions

The programme of precautionary observations and recording of the groundworks has confirmed that no significant archaeological features or deposits were impacted by the works, and that the archaeological programme was successful in offsetting any loss in the overall archaeological significance of the site.

## 5. References

- Brown, D. H., 2011 *Archaeological Archives. A guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation*. Second Edition, September 2011. Archaeological Archives Forum.
- CIfA, 2014a *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief*. December 2014. Chartered Institute for Archaeologists.
- CIfA, 2014b *Standard and Guidance for the Collection, Documentation, Conservation and Research of Archaeological Materials*. December 2014. Chartered Institute for Archaeologists.
- Papworth, M., 2000 *The National Trust Archaeological and Historic Landscape Survey, Golden Cap Estate, Dorset*. Unpublished National Trust report, September 2000.
- Terrain Archaeology 2006 *Golden Cap Water Supply Renewal, West Dorset. Archaeological Watching Brief*. Terrain Archaeology report 53199/3/1, March 2006.
- Terrain Archaeology 2011 *Replacement Gas Main, Charmouth to Morcombelake, West Dorset. Archaeological Watching Brief*. Terrain Archaeology report 53314/3/1, March 2011.

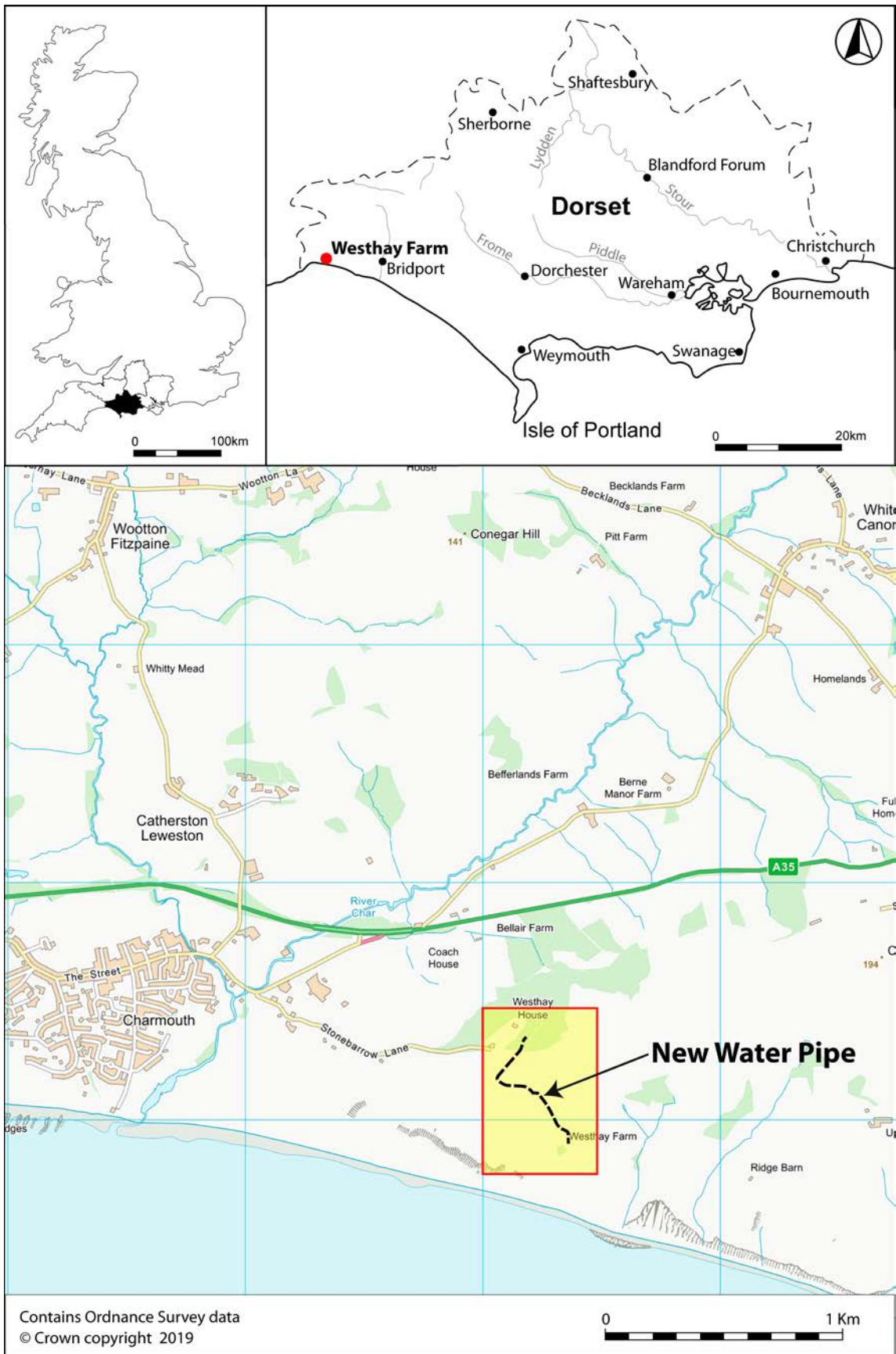


Figure 1 Location map.

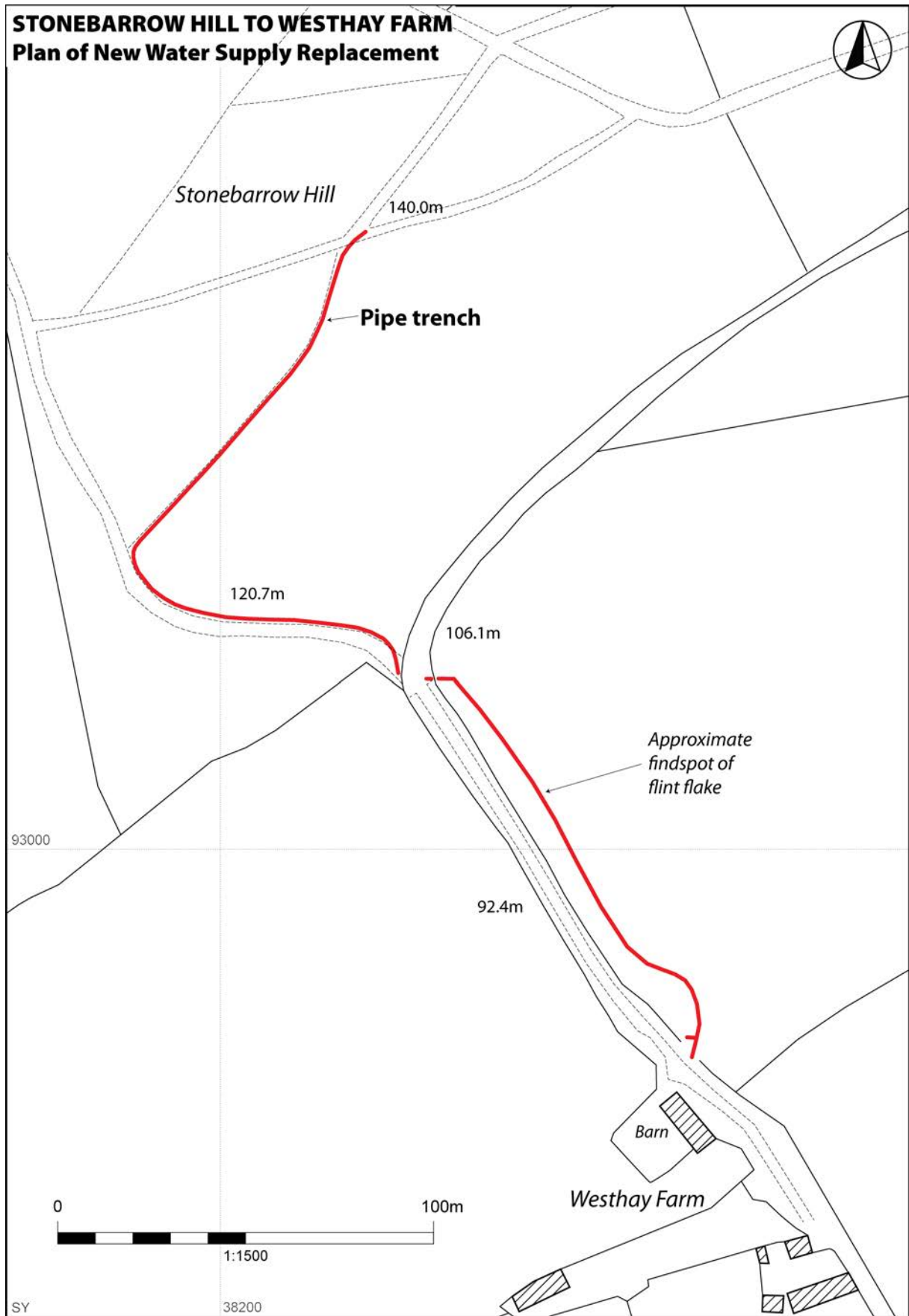


Figure 2: Plan of Pipe Trench.



*Plate 1: Pipe trench on upper slope of Stonebarrow Hill. View from north east*



*Plate 2: Pipe trench adjacent to trackway on lower slope of Stonebarrow Hill. View from south east*



*Plate 3: Pipe trench in meadow adjacent to Westhay Farm access track. View from south*