

Dimension and Natural Stone in New Brunswick



Stone is a very adaptable medium. It can be utilized in its natural state or cut into building blocks for office towers, manufactured into curbing stone or carved into ornate sculptures. These and countless other items are made of what we call dimension stone, or rock which has been shaped and/or finished.

Dimension stone's wide range of applications results from its multiple features. It is more durable than concrete, more variable than brick, stronger than wood – and extremely beautiful. It's no wonder that the building stone industry is undergoing a revival across North America.

A Rich History

The first people to work with New Brunswick stone used chert and basalt to make arrowheads and other items. European settlers erected many stone houses and some churches before 1850.

The heyday of New Brunswick's dimension stone industry lasted from 1855 until about 1910. During those decades, local stone architecture blossomed, and the province exported millions of tonnes of granite and sandstone throughout eastern North America. The stone found its way into such notable structures as the Ottawa parliament buildings, New England brownstone houses and New York's Central Park bridges.

Granite production came mainly from Devonian rocks in St. George and the Hampstead area in the southwest region. Sandstone was quarried from 300 million year old sedimentary rocks that are found in the southeastern part of the province and near Miramichi and Chaleur Bay.

Stonework Today

The quarrying and working of stone for various applications, once an important sector of New Brunswick's mining industry, continues to show signs of a modest revival. Although there are several companies in the province supplying stone products, only a few in the southern part of the province continue to quarry stone, mostly on a demand-basis. These companies include: Nelson Monuments Ltd. of Sussex, Smith Cut Stone and Quarries Ltd. of Shediac, Maritime Stone Works Inc. of Scoudouc and Bastarache Stone Quarrie Ltd. near Notre Dame. Both granite and sandstone are shaped into monuments, curbing, streetscaping and landscaping stone, stone for new building and restoration material.

There is considerable interest being shown in developing flagstone, fieldstone and other natural stone resources throughout the province. For example, in central and southern New Brunswick near Boiestown, Grand Lake and Hillsborough, operations are established to supply quality sandstone flagstone and related products for landscaping and other decorative applications destined for both the local and export markets.

Interesting Facts

- *The sandstone quarries along Chaleur Bay produced grindstones that were rated amongst the best in the world.*
- *Workers at the Hampstead quarry in southern New Brunswick have used a flame-jet method of stone extraction. They run a hot flame of compressed air and diesel fuel over a band of rock. The stone chips and spalls, creating a 10-cm-wide channel that can be used to wedge rock blocks apart.*



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