



Standard Terminology Relating to Dimension Stone¹

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INTRODUCTION

Dimension stone, as used here, is natural stone that has been selected and fabricated to specific sizes or shapes, with or without one or more mechanically dressed or finished surfaces, for use as building facing, curbing, paving stone, monuments and memorials, and various industrial products. The term *dimension stone* is in contradistinction to crushed and broken stone, such as is used for aggregate, roadstone, fill, or chemical raw materials. Because all stone is a natural material, the definition excludes all manmade materials that simulate stone. In common practice, some dimension stones are reinforced, filled, or surface treated.

Terms used in definitions and nomenclature shall be interpreted in accordance with commonly accepted scientific and technical terms of the geological sciences except as otherwise specifically noted.

Examples of such exceptions are the broader commercial definitions of granite and marble, which have become well established in the dimension stone industry and trade. Definitions and terms included in these definitions have been formulated in accordance with common industrial usage *where this is not in conflict with current scientific usage*.

GENERAL TERMS

anchor—in general, a metal shape inserted into a slot or hole in the stone that provides for the transfer of loads from the stone to the building structure, either directly or through an intermediate structure.

anchorage—the system consisting of stone, anchor and primary structure, secondary structure or back-up preventing lateral movement of the stone.

arris—the junction of two planes of the same stone forming an external corner.

ashlar—(1) a squared block of building stone; (2) a masonry of such stones; (3) a thin-dressed rectangle of stone for facing of walls (often called ashlar veneer).

building stone—natural rock of adequate quality to be quarried and cut as dimension stone as it exists in nature, as used in the construction industry.

chip—an irregularly-shaped piece of stone, usually with one convex surface, that has been dislodged from a snip.

cladding—nonload-bearing stone used as the facing material in wall construction that contains other materials.

crack—a partial break in the stone (see fracture, microcrack, seam).

cut stone—stone fabricated to specific dimensions.

dimension stone—natural stone that has been selected and fabricated to specific sizes or shapes.

DISCUSSION—The term *dimension stone* is in contradistinction to crushed and broken stone, such as is used for aggregate, roadstone, fill, or chemical raw materials. In common practice, some dimension stones are reinforced, filled, or surface treated.

dressed stone—See **cut stone**, **finished stone**.

durability—the measure of the ability of dimension stone to endure and to maintain its essential and distinctive characteristics of strength, resistance to decay, and appearance. Durability is based on the length of time that a stone can maintain its innate characteristics in use. This time will vary depending on the environment, the use, and the finish of the stone in question (for example, outdoor versus indoor use).

finished stone—dimension stone with one or more mechanically exposed surfaces.

bush-hammered—a rough uniformly patterned surface produced by an impact tool.

chat sawn—a rough finish produced by gangsawing with course chat sand.

diamond sawn—an even, relatively smooth sawn surface with fine striations on it from the diamond segments of the saw.

flamed—see *thermal*

honed—a superfine, smooth, satin-like, nonreflective finish.

polished—a smooth, reflective finish.

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rock face—a rough nonuniform convex surface that projects from the plane of the wall (stone) (see Fig. 1).

split face—a rough nonuniform cleft surface which may be slightly concave or convex.

thermal—a rough nonreflective finish (with a few reflections from cleavage planes) produced by applying a flame.

flooring—stone used as in interior pedestrian wearing surface.

fracture—a complete break in the stone (see crack, microcrack, seam).

grain—(1) a distinguishable rock constituent which itself has a distinct identity, for example, a mineral crystal, an oolith, a rock fragment (in sedimentary rocks), or clast.

(2) a direction in a rock body along which it is more easily broken, split, or cut. See rift.

granular—composed of particles visible to the unaided eye.

For sedimentary stone, the predominant particle distribution is less than 4 mm. in size.

hysteresis—the residual strain in stone after the stress causing such strain is changed.

installation—the process of assembling dimension stone into a structure.

microcrack—a crack too small to be seen with the unaided eye (see crack, fracture, seam).

monumental stone—rock of adequate quality to be quarried and cut as dimension stone as it exists in nature, as used in the monument and memorial industry.

open seams—unfilled fissures or naturally occurring cracks in stone.

panel—cut stone with face dimensions large in relation to its thickness, for placement in a building structure or frame assembly.

paving—stone used in an interior pedestrian wearing surface as in patios, walkways, driveways, and the like. (See *flooring*)

pits—small depressions, voids or pinholes in stone, especially on a finished surface.

polished finish—a surface that has high luster and strong reflection of incident light.

processing—the work involved in transforming quarry blocks into dimension stone, including sawing, drilling, grinding, honing, polishing, carving, and all other operations necessary for installation.

ribbon—in some slate, narrow bands of contrasting color or

appearance differing in some degree in chemical composition from the main body.

rift—(1) a consistent direction or trend in a rock body along which the rock is most easily split or broken.

(2) The grain orientation in stone, particularly in sedimentary stones, showing more or less clearly how the stone was originally bedded, and with or without color or grain-size changes, or voids and hollow.

rock—a naturally occurring, consolidated aggregation of one or more minerals constituting the crust of the Earth.

seam—a naturally filled or bonded crack which does not adversely affect the strength of a stone (see crack, fracture, microcrack).

shaped stone—dimension stone processed by carving, grinding, sawing, or other means into specific nonplanar configurations.

slab—a piece of stone produced by shaving or splitting in the first milling or quarrying operation. A slab has two parallel surfaces.

snip—the concave surface from which a chip has been dislodged.

sound stone—stone which is free of cracks, fissures, or other physical defects.

spalls—(1) fragments or chips from a piece of dimension stone. (2) waste stone usually of small size from the quarrying and milling of dimension limestone.

texture—(1) a modified appearance of dimension stone resulting from one or several mechanical surface treatments. Untreated stone surfaces have textural characteristics described under (2).

(2) that aspect of the physical appearance of a rock that is determined by size, shape, and mutual relations of the component grains or crystals. Textures related to dimension stone include *equigranular* (grains of approximately the same size); *inequigranular* (grains of markedly unequal sizes); *porphyritic* (see Note 2 under Granite Group); *interlocking* (in which grains with irregular boundaries interlock by mutual penetration); interlocking and porphyritic textures are characteristic of granites and marbles; *clastic* (naturally cemented fragmental grains but without mosaic or interlocking relations; this texture is typical of sandstones and some limestones); *mosaic* (closely packed grains with smooth to moderately irregular, noninterlocking mutual boundaries); *granoblastic* (a megascopically granular mosaic texture in which the grains are tightly compacted and the minerals are dominantly equidimensional and present irregular mutual boundaries; mosaic and granoblastic textures are characteristic of metamorphic rocks).

thin stone/thin veneer—a cladding under 2-in. thick.

tile—a thin modular stone unit.

veneer—a nonload-bearing facing of stone attached to a backing for the purpose of ornamentation, protection, or insulation.

DISCUSSION—Veneer shall support no vertical load other than its own weight and possibly the vertical dead load of veneer above.

walls, veneered—See *veneer*.

wear—the removal of material or impairment of surface finish through friction or impact.

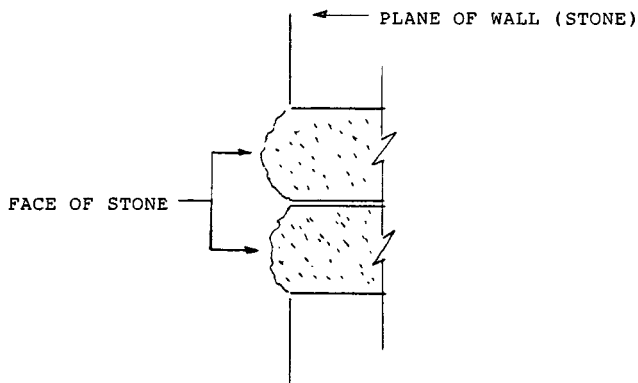


FIG. 1 Rock Face Diagram

DISCUSSION—Wear is an artificial process. The rate of wear may be affected by chemical action.

weathering—natural alteration by either chemical or mechanical processes due to the action of constituents of the atmosphere, surface water or ground water, or to temperature change.

DISCUSSION—Changes by weathering are not necessarily undesirable or harmful; rather they may enhance the texture and color of the stone.

GRANITE GROUP

granite (commercial definition)—a visibly granular, igneous rock generally ranging in color from pink to light or dark gray and consisting mostly of quartz and feldspars (Note 1), accompanied by one or more dark minerals. The texture is typically homogeneous but may be gneissic or porphyritic (Note 2). Some dark granular igneous rocks, though not geologically granite, are included in the definition (Note 3).

DISCUSSION—*Granite (scientific definition)*—A visibly granular, crystalline rock with equigranular or inequigranular texture, normally having an essential composition of two feldspars (alkali feldspar plus sodic plagioclase or two alkali feldspars (see second paragraph)) and quartz; certain granites contain only one feldspar. Quartz may amount to 10 to 60 % of the felsic (light-colored) constituents, while alkali feldspars may constitute about 35 to 100 % of total feldspars. Feldspars may be present as individual grains, or may be mutually intergrown on a megascopic to submicroscopic scale. Besides quartz and feldspars, granite typically also contains varietal minerals, commonly micas or hornblende, or both, more rarely pyroxene.

Alkali feldspar refers to a range of composition between KAlSi_3O_8 (potassic feldspar end member) and $\text{NaAlSi}_3\text{O}_8$ (albite end member), with 0 to 10 % of $\text{CaAl}_2\text{Si}_2\text{O}_8$ (anorthite end member). Potassic feldspar, which in granites is typically orthoclase or microcline, forms a nearly complete isomorphous series with the albite end member. The albite-anorthite compositional range, which may include as much as 10 % of KAlSi_3O_8 in solid solution, represents a continuous isomorphous series known as plagioclase feldspars; these have been arbitrarily subdivided according to the ration of anorthite (An) to albite (Ab) at 10, 30, 50, 70, and 90 % An. The plagioclase of granite *sensu stricto* commonly is oligoclase (An_{10-30}), less commonly albite (An_{0-10}).

DISCUSSION—*Gneiss*—A foliated crystalline rock composed essentially of silicate minerals with interlocking and visibly granular texture in which the foliation is due primarily to alternating layers, regular or irregular, of contrasting mineralogic composition. In general, a gneiss is characterized by relatively thick layers as compared with a schist. According to their mineralogic compositions gneisses may correspond to other crystalline rocks with visibly granular, interlocking texture, such as those included under the definition of commercial granite, and then may be known as *granite gneiss*, *granodiorite gneiss*, etc., if strongly foliated, and *gneissic granite*, etc., if weakly foliated. This distinction is subjective and not critical.

DISCUSSION—*Porphyritic Texture*—A texture defined by relatively large grains (phenocrysts), typically of feldspar, that are distributed in a distinctly finer-grained matrix. The phenocrysts of porphyritic granites generally are rectangular or partly rounded in outline, and may be as much as several centimetres in maximum dimension.

DISCUSSION—*Black Granites*—Dark-colored igneous rocks defined by geologists as *basalt*, *diabase*, *gabbro*, *diorite*, and *anorthosite* are quarried as building stone, building facings, monuments, and speciality purposes and sold as *black granite*. The chemical and mineralogical compositions of such rocks are quite different from those of true granites, but black granites nevertheless may be satisfactorily used for some of the same purposes as commercial granite. They possess an

interlocking crystalline texture but, unlike granites, they contain little or no quartz or alkali feldspar. Instead, black granites are composed dominantly of intermediate to calcic plagioclase accompanied by one or more common dark rock-forming minerals such as pyroxenes, hornblende, and biotite. Such rocks, because of their relatively high content of iron and magnesium, are designated as *ferromagnesian* or *mafic*. An exception is *anorthosite* which, though commonly dark, consists mostly or entirely of calcic plagioclase.

DISCUSSION—*Iridescent Granite*—A labradoritic granite characterized by a play of colors, ranging from clearly visible to brilliant. The play of colors is caused by the intergrowth of unmixed sodium and calcium plagioclase into very fine lamellae. It is commonly referred to by names such as black pearl, blue pearl, and emerald pearl.

LIMESTONE GROUP

limestone—a rock of sedimentary origin composed principally of calcium carbonate (the mineral calcite), or the double carbonate of calcium and magnesium (the mineral dolomite), or some combination of these two minerals.

DISCUSSION—Recrystallized limestone, compact microcrystalline limestone, and travertine that are capable of taking a polish are also included in the category *commercial marble* and may be sold as either limestone or marble.

Special varieties of commercial limestone

calcarenite—a limestone composed predominantly of clastic sand-size grains of calcite, or rarely aragonite, commonly as tiny fossils, shell fragments, or other fossil debris.

DISCUSSION—Some calcarenites contain oolites (or ooliths), that is, small spherical or subspherical grains that are composed of concentric layers of calcite and typically resemble roe. Such rocks may be termed *oolitic* limestones if the oolites are present in substantial amounts. Oolitic limestones are calcarenites, but not all calcarenites are oolitic limestones. The shell fragments and small fossils of some calcarenites have concentric coatings of calcite that may cause them to resemble oolites but the term *oolitic* is not appropriate for such calcarenites unless true oolites also are present.

coquina—a limestone composed predominantly of unaltered shells or shell fragments loosely cemented by calcite.

DISCUSSION—Coquina generally is very coarse-textured and has high porosity.

dolomite—a sedimentary carbonate rock (a variety of limestone) that consists largely or entirely of the mineral dolomite.

DISCUSSION—The rock term dolomite, as applied to dimension stone, is synonymous with the term dolostone as used in sedimentary petrology.

microcrystalline limestone—a limestone that consists largely or wholly of crystals that are so small as to be recognizable only under magnification. If it is capable of taking a polish, it is classified commercially as a marble.

oolitic limestone—a limestone composed largely of the spherical or subspherical particles called oolites or ooliths.

recrystallized limestone—a limestone in which a new pattern of crystallinity has pervasively replaced the crystal orientation in the original clastic particles, fossils or fossil fragments, and interstitial cement. The new generation of crystals, encompassing both fragmental and matrix materials, extends across boundaries between former crystals. The new

crystals generally are larger than those of the original rock. Evidence of original textures may or may not be retained. See also **marble** (next section).

travertine—a variety of crystalline or microcrystalline limestone distinguished by layered structure. Pores and cavities commonly are concentrated in some of the layers, giving rise to an open texture.

MARBLE GROUP

All stone here defined as marble must be capable of taking a polish.

Stone in this category comprises a variety of compositional and textural types, ranging from pure carbonate to rocks containing very little carbonate that are classed commercially as marble (for example, serpentine marble). Most marbles possess an interlocking texture and a range of grain size from cryptocrystalline to 5 mm.

marble (I calcite, II dolomite)²—carbonate rock that has acquired a distinctive crystalline texture by recrystallization, most commonly by heat and pressure during metamorphism, and is composed principally of the carbonate minerals calcite and dolomite, singly or in combination.

limestone marble—compact, dense limestone that will take a polish is classified as marble in trade practice. Limestone marble may be sold as limestone or as marble.

onyx marble—translucent, generally layered, cryptocrystalline calcite with colors in pastel shades, particularly yellow, brown, and green.

DISCUSSION—Onyx marble is formed by slow precipitation from generally cold solutions of carbonated (carbon-dioxide saturated) spring water.

DISCUSSION—The term “onyx” to designate onyx marble is a misnomer. True onyx is a nearly pure crystalline silica (silicon dioxide) closely related to agate, a semi-precious stone.

serpentine marble (III)³—a rock consisting mostly or entirely of serpentine (hydrated magnesium silicate), green to greenish-black in color, commonly veined with calcite, and dolomite or magnesite, or both (magnesium carbonate).

NOTE 1—The term *verd* (or *verde*) *antique* is popularly used for serpentine marble, but it may also refer to green marble or limestone marble devoid of serpentine. Because of its composition, “serpentine marble” is not a true marble in the geologic sense.

travertine marble (IV)²—a porous or cellularly layered, partly crystalline calcite of chemical origin.

NOTE 2—Travertine is formed by precipitation from generally hot solutions of carbonated spring water, usually at the bottom of shallow pools.

QUARTZ-BASED DIMENSION STONE GROUP

sandstone (commercial definition) (I)³—sedimentary rock composed mostly of mineral and rock fragments within the sand size range, from 0.06 to 2.0 mm, and having a

minimum of 60 % free silica, cemented or bonded to a greater or lesser degree by materials including silica and various carbonates, with iron oxides or clay sometimes present, and which has a compressive strength over 28 MPa (4,000 psi).

quartzitic sandstone (commercial definition) (II)³—sandstone containing at least 90 % free silica (quartz grains plus siliceous cement), which has a compressive strength over 69 MPa (10 000 psi).

quartzite (commercial definition) (III)³—highly indurated, typically metamorphosed sandstone containing at least 95 % free silica, which has a compressive strength of over 117 MPa (17 000 psi).

bluestone—a dense, hard, fine-grained, commonly feldspathic sandstone of medium to dark greenish-gray or bluish-gray color that may split readily along original bedding planes to form thin slabs (flagstone). The term bluestone is applied principally to stone with the above characteristics quarried in the eastern United States.

DISCUSSION—Varieties of sandstone are commonly designated by the kind of interstitial or bonding materials, as *siliceous sandstone* (bonding material largely silica); *calcareous sandstone* (calcium carbonate as bonding material or as detrital grains, or both); *argillaceous sandstone* (clay minerals prominent as bonding materials, includes *bluestone*, see Note 2); *ferruginous sandstone* (iron oxide minerals such as hematite and limonite as bonding materials, characteristically imparting a red-brown or brown color to the stone [*brownstone*], see Note 3). The more common commercial varieties of sandstone are defined as follows:

DISCUSSION—*sandstone (scientific definition)*—sedimentary rock composed mostly of mineral and rock fragments within the sand size range, from 0.06 to 2.0 mm, and having a minimum of 60 % free silica, cemented or bonded to a greater or lesser degree by materials including silica and various carbonates with iron oxides or clay sometimes present, and which fractures around (not through) the constituent grains.

quartzitic sandstone (scientific definition)—sandstone containing at least 90 % free silica (quartz grains plus siliceous cement), which may fracture around or through the constituent grains.

quartzite (scientific definition)—highly indurated, typically metamorphosed sandstone containing at least 95 % free silica, which fractures conchoidally through the grains.

Brownstone—a dense, medium-grained stone, locally grading to conglomerate, with a distinctive dark brown to red-brown color. The term has been applied to stone quarried in the Jurassic-Triassic basins in the northeastern United States (mainly Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Pennsylvania), but the geographic limitation is undesirable.

DISCUSSION—These detrital stone types are locally quarried but are commercially unimportant:

conglomerate—a sedimentary rock consisting of rounded pebbles and cobbles in a sandstone matrix, typically strongly cemented.

siltstone—a fine-grained, noncarbonated clastic rock composed mostly of detrital quartz and clay minerals in which the particles have an approximate size range from 0.06 to 0.005 mm. Siltstone may be designated fine-grained sandstone, and is texturally transitional between sandstone and shale.

SLATE GROUP

slate—microcrystalline metamorphic rock most commonly derived from shale and composed mostly of micas, chlorite, and quartz. The micaceous minerals have a subparallel orientation and thus impart strong cleavage to the rock which

² Designations I through IV correspond to Table 1 in Specification C 503, for Marble Dimension Stone, Vol 04.08.

³ Designations I through III correspond to Specification D 616, for Quartz-Based Dimension Stone, Vol 04.08.

allows the latter to be split into thin but tough sheets.

shale—a laminated, indurated rock which is over two-thirds clay-sized minerals. Shales progressively grade into slate. When put to slate-like uses these rocks must meet slate specifications in Specification C 629.

DISCUSSION—This detrital stone type is locally quarried but is commercially unimportant.

OTHER GROUP

There are a number of stones that are infrequently used. Some semiprecious stones such as jade are cut and used as dimension stone. They would most commonly be used as a contrast or accent in connection with other dimension stone.

Other infrequently used stones include:

alabaster—a soft, easily carved massive form of gypsum

(calcium sulfate), often pleasingly blotched and stained. A banded stalagmitic calcite is also called alabaster.

greenstone—a metamorphic rock of basic or ultrabasic composition, of very fine grain size, ranging in color from medium green to yellowish green to almost black.

schist—a foliated metamorphic quartz-feldspar-containing rock characterized by thin foliae of platy or prismatic minerals such as mica or chlorite. Schists split readily along these planes of foliation. This rock exists in many gradations, some of them progressing into a gneiss.

soapstone (steatite)—a talc-rich rock with a characteristic slippery feel. Soapstone is quarried for special purposes, such as fireplaces and laboratory counter tops, because of its refractory nature and resistance to acids.

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