


STONE HAMMER

UPTOWN SAINT JOHN

Location: Saint John, NB. Uptown area of the city near Market Square
GPS: 45°16.37' N; 66°03.73' W

Access: 24/7, free 

Geological Age: Precambrian to Carboniferous
 600 to 300 million years old; historic

Features: Visitor Information, restaurants, shops, hotels, City Market, New Brunswick Museum



ROCKS

Uptown Saint John is built mostly on Cambrian rocks of the Saint John Group (COs) first described in detail in the 1880s by local geologist George Matthew. At the south end of the Uptown peninsula there are volcanic rocks of the Precambrian to Cambrian age (Taylors Island Formation - ZCT), and Upper Carboniferous rocks of the Lancaster Formation (CL) along the shore. Outcrops can be seen scattered around the Uptown area, below buildings and along sidewalks. Saint John Group rocks are visible on Canterbury Street near the corner of Princess Street, or behind the Courthouse east of Kings Square.

ROCKS AND BUILDINGS

Uptown Saint John provides other opportunities to explore geology. Many of the older buildings are built of New Brunswick stone. In particular, buildings constructed immediately after the Great Fire of 1877 are interesting. Fire destroyed about 1600 buildings south of King Street in June 1877. The city was quickly rebuilt, especially the commercial district along Prince William and King streets. By this time the Province had a flourishing building stone industry and many new buildings in Saint John were constructed of sandstone from southeastern New Brunswick, granite from Hampstead and Charlotte County, and local marble.

SANDSTONE SCULPTURE

Be sure to look up when exploring the geology of Uptown Saint John. Many of the most interesting features are the sandstone carvings around windows and doorways. Sandstone is a relatively soft material and it was used extensively to create decorative elements on buildings. Try counting the animals on the Palantine Building on Prince William Street. Red and black 'granite' is much harder and was used to make colourful pillars. The St. George granite industry in Charlotte County had only just begun a few years before the Great Fire. You can sometimes tell pre- and post-fire buildings by the use of St. George granite.



Palantine Building, Prince William Street



Rebuilt in Stone guide, New Brunswick Museum



Trinity Church, Germain Street entrance



Domville Building, King Street



Old Post Office, Prince William Street