

Native Serpentine Stone

The earliest Colonial inhabitants of Chester County were quick to notice the existence of barren patches of ground that grew stunted evergreens and little else. It was quickly realized that the stunting of vegetation was associated with the greenish stone in the bedrock and these spots were identified as serpentine barrens. The barrens were readily quarried as the serpentine stone was attractive, close to the surface, and soft enough to cut without great difficulty. By around the turn of the 19th century, green serpentine stone had become the dominant building material in the vicinity of Strode's Mill. The source of the serpentine stone used so finely at the East Bradford Boarding School for Boys, the Strode Farmhouse, and Strode's Barn is likely either the Brinton Quarry, located just southeast of the village on South New Street, which supplied the West Chester and Philadelphia region, or the serpentine vein located on the northeast section of the Strode Farm that was also quarried. Serpentine stone, while attractive, is a notably soft stone that does not hold up well once exposed to the elements, especially in urban areas where there are higher concentrations of sulfur in the air. Brown stone, or local fieldstone, was used in the construction of the Strode's Mill and Miller's House, in addition to the earliest core of Strode's Barn, adjacent to where you are now standing. The transition from fieldstone to serpentine stone can be clearly seen on the southwest façade of Strode's Barn.

