

Hello. This session will consider Gothic architecture. Before we turn to consider the multi-faceted qualities of Georgian Gothic architecture, it is necessary to ground this exploration in genuine Gothic architecture from the medieval period, which is the source of the style's revival in the eighteenth century.

Medieval Gothic architecture opposed accepted classical forms, resulting in critics, such as the artist Raphael and commentator Vasari, portraying it as the crude work of 'barbarian' Goths who sacked Rome. It appeared most obviously in service to the church. The architectural style's central characteristic is the pointed arch that developed c.1100 in Romanesque or pre-Gothic architecture in France. Gothic architecture emphasised greater height, lightness and visual complexity in comparison with Romanesque, pre-Gothic architecture, effects which it achieved by harnessing a range of structural elements, including ribbed vaults, flying buttresses, large windows and tracery. Indeed, over the course of Gothic architecture's development (from the twelfth to fifteenth centuries) increasingly expansive windows were introduced into the structure of buildings. This inevitably reduced the structural load-bearing capacity of the walls so buttresses and eventually flying buttresses were harnessed to convey safely the lateral thrusts exerted by the high vaults.

By 1120 the French, English and Italians had partially integrated the pointed arch and ribbed vault into buildings, though at St-Denis, Paris, by 1144 these elements had been combined with spectacular effects at the church's east end. The ambulatory and radiating chapels integrate to create spatial fluidity, with vaults springing from columnar piers, and the space is lit uniformly by the large windows. The striking modernity of this architectural intervention promoted the Royal Abbey and cult of St-Denis; however, St-Denis was not a miraculous apparition, nor the exemplar for all Gothic churches, though elements in the church were taken and combined in other structures. Until 1150 there was no homogeneous form of Gothic architecture: variations arose according to patron and location. However, there developed a universal fixation upon verticality: the churches were designed to reach up to heaven, and to let heavenly light in. A unanimous concentration on vertically — reaching up to God — occurred in medieval Gothic architecture, leading to a fourth story being added to the internal elevations. This enabled three of the four zones to be pierced with glazing, enhancing the fragility and luminosity of the interior. However, Trinitarian elevations persisted — that is, having three distinct internal registers within the cathedrals, moving from the arcade at the bottom through the triforium and up to the clerestory at the top.

The High Gothic phase saw the development of flying buttresses. These conduct lateral thrusts from the high vaults to the exoskeleton of buttress piers, enabling height to be achieved without the need for an extra level in the elevation. This also permitted the clerestory lights to be brought below the level of the high vault springers, such as at the Cathedral of Chartres' nave.

The introduction of bar tracery, that is bar-like pieces of stonework structuring the window openings, at Reims Cathedral, promoted an impression of a stone skeleton

in the interiors, whilst tracery and pinnacles applied to the exterior represented the metalwork of shrines, resulting in Sainte-Chapelle being an architectural expression of religiosity.

Unlike the case in France, wealth was not concentrated in the Crown in England, preventing a coherent Gothic architectural vocabulary from developing, although links to North East France were established by the Cistercians from 1152. When Canterbury Cathedral in England was re-built, the Romanesque outer walls and crypt were preserved, although a three-story elevation was installed with sexpartite vaults, directing England towards light architecture, with Westminster Abbey blending Romanesque, pre-Gothic mass with Gothic delicacy.

After 1300, France was no longer the hotbed of architectural innovation, while a fission in Gothic architecture split Southern 'Europe,' which adopted mural simplicity, from the North, where there was a concentration on tracery and decorative niches covering all surfaces, led by England, to better the *de-luxe* character of French Rayonnant style characterised by greater luminosity and the unification of the windows and tracery in the clerestory and triforium. Royal patronage of late-Gothic in England led to a free handling of ornament, where the curvilinear ogee arch, an arch formed by the meeting of two s-shaped curves, invigorated tracery designs, forming flames at York Minster, that covered surfaces, whilst organising and simultaneously dissolving them.

In contrast, the Perpendicular Gothic style, which abandoned the lavish particularity of the curvilinear motifs, instead favoured a limited vocabulary of designs. This resulted in the fan vaults at King's College Chapel, Cambridge, along with a more austere utility in parish church window tracery.

The perpendicular style continued in Britain as the default style for church architecture, and examples of Perpendicular tracery being inserted into earlier buildings to update them is not unknown. And in the Tudor period Gothic was subtly modified but still adopted, for example at Hampton Court Palace, London, or Cardinal College, Oxford, re-named Christ Church, Oxford.