

Gothic architecture is an architectural style that was prevalent in Europe from the late 12th to the 16th century, during the High and Late Middle Ages, surviving into the 17th and 18th centuries in some areas.[1] It evolved from Romanesque architecture and was succeeded by Renaissance architecture. It originated in the Île-de-France and Picardy regions of northern France. The style at the time was sometimes known as opus Francigenum (lit. 'French work');[2] the term Gothic was first applied contemptuously during the later Renaissance, by those ambitious to revive the architecture of classical antiquity. The defining design element of Gothic architecture is the pointed or ogival arch. The use of the pointed arch in turn led to the development of the pointed rib vault and flying buttresses, combined with elaborate tracery and stained glass windows.[3] At the Abbey of Saint-Denis, near Paris, the choir was reconstructed between 1140 and 1144, drawing together for the first time the developing Gothic architectural features. In doing so, a new architectural style emerged that emphasized verticality and the effect created by the transmission of light through stained glass windows.[4] Common examples are found in Christian ecclesiastical architecture, and Gothic cathedrals and churches, as well as abbeys, and parish churches. It is also the architecture of many castles, palaces, town halls, guildhalls, universities and, less prominently today, private dwellings. Many of the finest examples of medieval Gothic architecture are listed by UNESCO as World Heritage Sites. With the development of Renaissance architecture in Italy during the mid-15th century, the Gothic style was supplanted by the new style, but in some regions, notably England and Belgium, Gothic continued to flourish and develop into the 16th century. A series of Gothic revivals began in mid-18th century England, spread through 19th-century Europe and continued, largely for churches and university buildings, into the 20th century.