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# **A Guide to the Gothic sights in the town of České Budějovice**







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## Prokop Church in the Old City



### Přemysl Otakar II. Square

Since the time of the establishment of the town, the main square of České Budějovice has been formed in a square shape of the size 132 times 135 metres. Some Latin sources mention it as the Forum Civitatis since the beginning of the 14 th century, some German sources use the common name Ring or Markt, Markplatz, where we can find the origins of our word Rynek. Along all the square there used to be single parcels with the width of 8 metres for new townhouses. In the 2 nd half of the 14 th century reconstruction works were happening which brought a continuous belt of arcades, originally including a beam ceiling, but now the arcades line all the square. However, all the central space doesn't have the same architectural style these days because rich burghers rebuilt their houses a few times



during centuries according to the contemporary styles of those periods. Despite that we can still find there several Gothic sights.

### Erratic stone

If you take ten steps from the fountain in the direction of hotel "Zvon" you will find there a stone with a cross engraving. This stone has been preserved in the new cobblestone of the square and is traditionally called „Erratic stone“. The legend says that exactly at this place ten young apprentices were executed in the year 1478 because they dared to attack a magistrate. After that person found out that those apprentices were going to riot he burst into the pub where the apprentices used to meet but there was a fight afterwards and somebody stabbed him in the heart. None of the apprentices pleaded guilty so they were all executed. According to the folk tale the person who crosses the Erratic stone unknowingly after 10pm will be lost forever and won't get home.











## **MALLNER'S CORNER HOUSE**

**Mallner's or also Prindl's house has a classicist facade but its Gothic elements are still obvious. These elements are two pointed arches in the arcade and the rest of the recently uncovered fresco of the Adoration of the Magi dating back to the turn of 14th and 15th century. Andrew Prindl, the owner of the house, belonged to the richest citizens of the České Budějovice town at that time. He profited mainly from trading with salt which was transferred via Freistatt from Linz, and also from the suburban's court revenue.**







### **HOUSE 67/17**

**This house also has a Gothic origin. We can see it in the pointed arches in the arcade and mainly in the stone frieze with Gothic traceries on the front facade which is unique for České Budějovice. Mostly classicist building nowadays belonged to the rich Prindl's family in the Middle Ages. Later, the poet Josef Krasoslav Chmelenský, who is known for writing the first opera librettos to the music of Franz Škroup, rented a student apartment here in 1817-1818.**







### **The Church of Madonna's Sacrifice**

**The Cloister-church started to be built in 1265, at the same time as the newly established town, and already in 1274 the church was consecrated. In 1418 the picture of Madonna was transported to Dominican Cloister and then became the focus of a special respect of the burghers from České Budějovice. The picture also affected the way of depicting Madonna. In the second half of the 15th century the dominicans had a Gothic cloister tower with a cross vault built, which was rebuilt to the contemporary form with a baroque dome in 1772. Despite the fact that the temple burnt down a few times, it has kept the original early-Gothic form until now.**









### **The monastery church of St.Mary´s sacrifice**

**The monastery church of St.Mary´s sacrifice is formed as a three-nave basilica with a non-salient transverse nave. The chancel is east oriented and the western front facade is adjacent to the town's fortification walls. Considering architecture, the choir (or chancel) belongs to the most valuable parts of the church, dating back to the time of monastery foundation – the year 1265. It is also thanks to the characteristic tracery of the windows with radial and rounded shapes which are so typical for Czech buildings from the second half of the 13th century. At the sides of the choir there are small portals originally used as entrances to side chapels. However, the furnishing of the choir comes from 19th century.**

**The three-nave area is divided by six pairs of pillars and in the arches we can find cross vaults on shaped ribs.**



### Relics of painted decoration from the 14th century

This is an extraordinary painting which consists of two layers. In the older layer is Madonna with a baby, a kneeling donator, St. Dominic and two saintesses at the sides of niches. This layer dates probably back to the 14th century. The younger painting depicts Pietà, i.e. Virgin Mary with Jesus Christ's dead body on her knees, on the left side of the niche there is St. Catharine Alexandrian and opposite her there is St. Barbara. This layer comes from about 1400. Gothic painters weren't satisfied with a schematic drawing. They put characters into the S-shaped pose directed up to heavens.





## **Saint Christofer**

**Painting of Saint Christofer is 10 metres high and it's the biggest picture of Saint Christofer in the Czech Republic. This painting dates back to approximately 1400. Following the advice of a hermit Christofer served Christ by ferrying pilgrims across the river. Once he was carrying a child who was becoming heavier and heavier. It was little Jesus himself who then baptized the giant himself and started to call him Christophorus. As a sign that the child was Jesus himself Christofer's cane became green. Saint Christofer's depiction is very similar in all the periods: a giant leaning against a huge stick or a trunk of a tree, holding little Jesus on his shoulders. He has become a patron saint of all motorists.**







### **Dominican Monastery - The Cloister**

**The cloister is a closed and arched corridor with a top view of a square shape. It is also called the "ambit". Most of that is around an atrium which served as a rest place. Typical feature is the opening of the cloister into the atrium area by arcades or windows. Gothic windows depict a circle as the basic theme. We can recognize traceries by number of the lobes, 3-lobes (since the year 1200) up to many-lobes. In the fourteenth century circles disappeared and only spherical triangles or quadrangles remained. In this case we can differentiate trefoil, quatrefoil etc.**







### **Flamboyant style**

**Flamboyant style is a French term for late Gothic architecture which is typical with its flame formation (like a curled drop) of some parts of buildings. This style was invented in northern England and was used for the first time in the windows of the cathedral in York.**

**In Europe it spread mainly in France. From there it must have travelled across Normandy and the Netherlands to the Czech countries where it was first used by Petr Parléř while building St. Vitus' Cathedral.**



## Virgin Mary

In the picture there is Virgin Mary as a young girl clothed in a cloak that is studded with spikes. A lot of medieval artists liken her to a fertile cornfield. The motive also has a historical reason: Kateřina, the wife of Duke Giovanni Galeaz Visconti, gave a cloak with spikes to the statue of Virgin Mary to show her gratefulness for the birth of her son. In the time of Thirty-Year War the citizens of České Budějovice appealed to Virgin Mary as a patron of the town. For this reason she was pictured like that in various places, for example in the Church of Madonna's Sacrifice, on Marian Column and on a house in Široká Street.





## **console**

A console is a piece of stone jutting out of the wall carrying a cornice, an oriel or a ribbed vault, sometimes just carrying the sticking-out stone itself. A bigger inornate console commonly used in Gothic style is called a cantilever (in German "Kragstein"). In the Church of Virgin Mary's Sacrifice there are several corbels. Those corbels were carved into different shapes - for example a devil, monkey or lion. However, the most interesting of all are two corbels carved as human heads located on the northern and southern sides of the chancel. The first one has got a sharply carved grinning face, whilst the second one has a calm expression in a softly carved face. Corbels have kept their medieval colours with gilding.







### **Iron Maiden**

**Iron Maiden is located at Zátkovo waterfront near the confluence of the rivers Vltava and Malše. This castle tower from the 14th century used to be a part of the town's fortifications. It received its name after an instrument of torture which is said to have been used in the tower. A four-level building with a setback last floor is covered with a hip roof. Originally there used to be only one entrance on the first floor but later a second entrance was broken through on the ground floor. In 1612 a lightning struck the tower after which the building was reconstructed**







### **The Rabenstein's Tower**

The tower was apparently built at the end of the 14th century while improvements to the town-fortification were done. Originally it was a Gothic tower with a highpitched hip roof where we can still find a part of the former castle gallery (in the section facing the street), boosted on stone corbels. The lower space of the tower was formerly open just through a hole in the floor of the higher level and that's why it was used as a local prison. The direct entry was built in 1828 together with total reconstruction of the tower. Nowadays there are civic flats in there.









## The magistrate's house

A magistrate was the king's deputy in the newly-founded towns. The first one in Česká Budějovice was from the family of Klaric and he took office in 1296 which helped to stabilize the local situation. The Klaric family remained in the seat until 1457 when Ladislav Pohrobek approved the right of the citizens to choose their own magistrate. The magistrate's house was located in Panská street which used to be called Biřická or Biřiců, sometimes also Šatlavní, as well as "šerhovní"- derived from a folk name for prison - because of the bailiffs' flats and prison that used to be there. A fresco figure with scales is still on the building, symbolizing justice, and the inscription IHS, Jesus, the saviour of mankind.









### **The Black Tower**

The Black Tower was built between the years 1549 – 1577 and the town council assigned the Italian builder Hans Spatz to supervise this construction. The lower part of the tower was built in Gothic style whereas the upper part with a dome and gallery refer to Renaissance. The Black Tower is 71.9 metres high. It used to serve as a bell tower and it got a lot of repairs during the centuries. The last general reconstruction so far happened in the years 1982 – 1985. Legend says that it's called "black" because of the fire of 1641 which destroyed Saint Nicholas' Church and the flames singed the tower.









### **Cathedral of Saint Nicholas**

The cathedral was founded in 1265 alongside with the town of České Budějovice and one of the town graveyards was built nearby. The Gothic part of the church was not finished until the end of the 14th century. In 1641 a huge fire burned down the cathedral. Therefore a large reconstruction began in the same year. That restoration gave the cathedral its today's early-baroque look. Only the chancel of the cathedral was preserved from the former Gothic building.









### **Saint John the Baptist and Saint Prokop Church in the Old City**

**This church is the oldest Gothic church in the town of České Budějovice. It was built in the 13th century. It is situated behind the department store called Družba. It used to be a part of the Old Town which is older than the České Budějovice town. It was even used as a parish church before finishing the church of Saint Nicolas. It's a single-nave building with a rectangular pulpit and a prismatic tower where we can find the oldest bells in České Budějovice which date back to the years 1546 and 1548. There are relics of Gothic paintings on the walls of the chancel of the church and of the nave too. The first changes to the style happened in 1461- in pseudo-Gothic period. The 16th century brought other changes and the last reconstruction of the building so far is from the year 1977. Around the church there is an old-town cemetery where we can find graves of many significant inhabitants - for example Jan Valerián Jirsík.**



## The students of Grammar School in Jírovcova street, České Budějovice

Fotografie 1.A , 1.B, KVINTA \_\_\_\_\_Text SEKUNDA

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