A stave church was a medieval post and lintel constructed building using massive timbers harvested from the surrounding areas in northern Europe. Borgund Stave Church (7.22), built between 1180 and 1250 CE, is a triple nave stave church and the best preserved of Norway's many stave churches. The timber framing formed the load-bearing posts and was called "stav" in Norwegian. The four corner posts are attached by groundsills erected on top of the stone foundation. The staves are connected to the groundsills and each other with notches and grooves, locking together in a similar way modern dovetail joints work.
Borgund Stave Church is designed on the traditional basilica plan (7.23) but with narrower side aisles and a raised central nave surrounded on four sides with arches to form an arcade. The shingle-covered roof (7.24) creates a walkway around the building for maintenance. Two steeply angled supports cross to form scissor beams supporting the roof, the lower part of the crossed beams has a truss to add additional support. This scissor beam construction is typical of stave churches. Long horizontal boards covered with shingles form the roof while other crossing beams held in place with smaller pieces positioned in-between for stability.
7.23 Borgund Stave interior

7.24 Roof shingles
A tower tops the multiple tiered roofs, and decorated gables of carved dragonheads swoop out from the peaks, the dragonheads (7.25) are similar to those found on the Norse ships. The sides of the ridge crests were carved with vines and other repeating designs. Elegant crosses were carved on the base of the altar and the wooden walls finishing off the decoration on the church.
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