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Dear colleagues and friends,

Most financial institutions' buildings are landmarks. Placed in the heart of city centres, they occupy prominent spaces in our urban environments. They are built to last.

'Built on striking locations by famed architects using the latest techniques, they were also seen as a highly distinctive architectural expression that could show off the modernity of the bank.'¹

As we will see in this edition, many institutions are built like palaces with features that include elegant facades, grand stairways, marble sculptures of allegorical figures and cathedral-like groined arches. They follow the ideals of Italian Renaissance or Historical Romanticism.

One example is Zurich Insurance's building: 'The building fulfils its purpose of housing the headquarters of a great and successful company. The massive overall structure, together with the palace-like features assembled in the middle broadcast seriousness, wealth and power. These qualities are of special importance for an insurance company that basically trades in trust: the promise to pay significant sums of money sometime in the future.'²

Financial buildings – central bank buildings (which do hold the gold reserve of their respective countries) in particular – often reflect the idea of strength, stability and continuity. More than that, they are supposed to endure and resist financial and other crises.

'Despite the tumultuous decades that followed crises, upheavals and wars, social revolution, political and economic discontinuities, the National Bank's building has remained one of the rare edifices whose original appearance and purpose has been well preserved.'³

As a matter of course these ideals and perceptions differ amongst regions and change over time – sometimes there is a mixing of the old and the new. This is the case in the Netherlands, where, in the 1960s, it was thought that: 'a bank that issues and circulates money on behalf of the government should not be too grand or ostentatious'.⁴

The Swiss National Bank's view about their building is that it



is: 'the compromise of tradition and modernity, functionality and monumentality, austerity and adornment, and even manages to blend features of the Italian Renaissance with the hipped roof commonly found in northern Europe ... this style, typical of the era, offered cultural orientation in an age of uncertainty'.⁵

It is interesting to see how the buildings presented in this collection reflect the time they were built in, the corporate governance structure and commonly shared values of societies and citizens. Further, the nuanced differences of national ideals are strikingly obvious almost everywhere. For example, the German Bundesbank is built in a 'brutal style: an honest architecture'.⁶ It seems impossible to imagine how German values could be better reflected. Of course these statements only go so far before they become their own cliché. But as we all know, clichés come from somewhere – there may be a grain of truth. 'Craftsmanship and precision (as expressed in the building of the Swiss National Bank) embody the core facets of Swiss national identity.'⁷ Isn't that what we all would consider 'Swiss'?

Financial Buildings mirror an important aspect of urban environments. Moreover, they are closely linked to the urban and economic development of cities and countries. The post-war mindset of innovation that dominated the optimistic 1950s and 60s - when Europe was rebuilt after the war - is reflected in the buildings created at the time. Likewise, the urban development of financial centres like Zurich, London and Frankfurt is inseparably associated with the construction

1 Christiane de Fleurieu. *The BNP Paribas Mile*

2 Christofer Stadlin. *The Making and Meaning of a 'Versicherungs Palast'*

3 Sonja Jerkovic, Sasa Ilic and Vladimir Bulajvic. *Edifice of the National Bank of Serbia*

4 Gert Eijkelboom. *Unpopular icon of the 1960s. The headquarters of the Nederlandsche Bank*

5 Evelyn Ingold. *The Swiss National Bank's head office in Zurich: a new feature on the city's familiar skyline*

6 Rolf Herget. *Die Deutsche Bundesbank. Its architecture and art*

7 Evelyn Ingold..

works financed by the same industry.

There was a clear trend during the 1980s to mix the ideals of strength and stability one would expect from an institution that trades in trust with the realization that dynamism and flexibility are key factors for success in this business as well – and hence these values need to be associated with the institutions' domicile.

There are so many particularities to be discovered, like the (intentional or coincidental) choice of location: for instance, the European Central Bank is located exactly opposite of where all other financial institutions are based along the river Main – or the fact that Rothschild's headquarters always have been (and probably always will be) in the same spot in St. Swithin's Lane.

And of course, the glory is not only meant for the clients and those who see the complexes from the outside: 'When all the brilliant business results the company regularly achieves are taken into account, one involuntarily develops the wish to become an employee and maybe even spend a lifetime under the protecting roof of the insurance palace.'⁸ Palaces are meant to impress citizens and customers. However, they should also awaken pride in employees as well as a desire to be there.

Corporate architecture is corporate identity. Corporate architecture reflects corporate governance as well as the needs and changes in society. Aiming at prestige, grandeur, continuity and solidity would no longer be justifiable in the 21st century. The focus in architecture has now shifted towards social awareness, environmental responsibility, sustainable initiatives, staff well-being and positive interaction with local communities.

Some institutions are developing this approach even more progressively by creating modular structures and open public spaces and gardens (e.g. Norges Bank) or 'Campus' buildings (e.g. Crédit Agricole). High tech companies seem to have paved the way in this regard by developing innovative models of architecture in which the blurring of lines between work and leisure, duty and 'fun', outside and inside, the natural and the artificial is the norm.

What do these developments tell us about the way the financial sector is functioning and being governed – do they indicate anything in this respect at all? Do national buildings reflect national identities and variations of modern capitalism? And, if so, which values are shared and which are regional and how do they change over time?

Is the function of finance reflected in the form of its institutions' edifices? Can we determine whether a company runs

its business in an open, transparent and integrated way from the way in which its headquarters are presented to the wider public and integrated into the urban landscape?

Which stories can buildings' transformations tell about the changes and renewals of countries and places over time?

This volume aims to be a starting point. We want to start a collection of cases and stories of financial institutions – in this case, European financial institutions – in order to get a sense of the bigger picture: how does finance change the way we work? How does finance change the way we live? Or is it occasionally the other way around: can the way we live transform finance?

eabh plans to do a second, and possibly third, edition with the help of its new, old and potential member institutions. Thereafter, it is planned that selected case studies and more conceptual research on the topic will follow. We as an Association are most grateful to all the individuals, teams and institutions that have contributed with their knowledge in written word and imagery. All suggestions and recommendations are very welcome and I would like to encourage everyone with a particular interesting case study in mind (whether it concerns institutions, a particular country, an époque, or more generally) to get in touch with *eabh* at: info@eabh.info.

Personally, first and foremost, I would like to thank my colleague, Gabriella Massaglia, for being the person, who had this great idea, encouraged everyone to contribute and followed through with infinite dedication and enthusiasm. Further, my gratitude goes to Hugo Bänziger, who supported the idea with interest and insight from the beginning and last not least, to Jonathan Ercanbrack whose language and content advice has been crucially important for the quality of most of this volume's content.

I hope you enjoy reading this issue about the architecture of financial institutions.

Yours faithfully



Carmen Hofmann
Secretary General

⁸ Christopher Stadlin. *The Making and Meaning of a 'Versicherungs Palast'*.



From Florence to Foster.

The financial services and their buildings

John Booker

Banks are difficult buildings to discuss. On the one hand, they are just a building type among so many others; on the other hand, they are a type which has evolved over centuries to accommodate a particular profession, and that is something very rare.

Building types are distinguished by the function which they purport to represent, which often means they were designed from the inside outwards. For instance, a school will have class-rooms, a hospital will have wards, a library will have shelving, and so on, and the arrangement of those defining elements will have first claim to the architect's attention. On the exterior, the task will be to produce a design which labels the building for what it is. There will, of course, be constraints. The project must come within budget, meet any stylistic aspirations of the client, and satisfy the rules of the local authority. A successful architect will harmonise the appearance of the building with its function, but it may be difficult to reflect the external styling in the internal disposition.

Designing banks, however, has traditionally been different. Often a handsome façade gives way to an opulent banking hall, which is as far as most customers penetrate. This gives the impression that the building was designed from the outside inwards, in so far as the exterior dictates what the interior will look like. The conclusion for many people, over the years, has been that banks are only too easy to design: that there could be a kind of cloned façade which, give or take the odd column or sculptured panel, would do equally well in London, Paris or Berlin. But such a view is simplistic, because it takes no account of the subtlety of banking and the complexity of its past. To design any building successfully, an architect has had



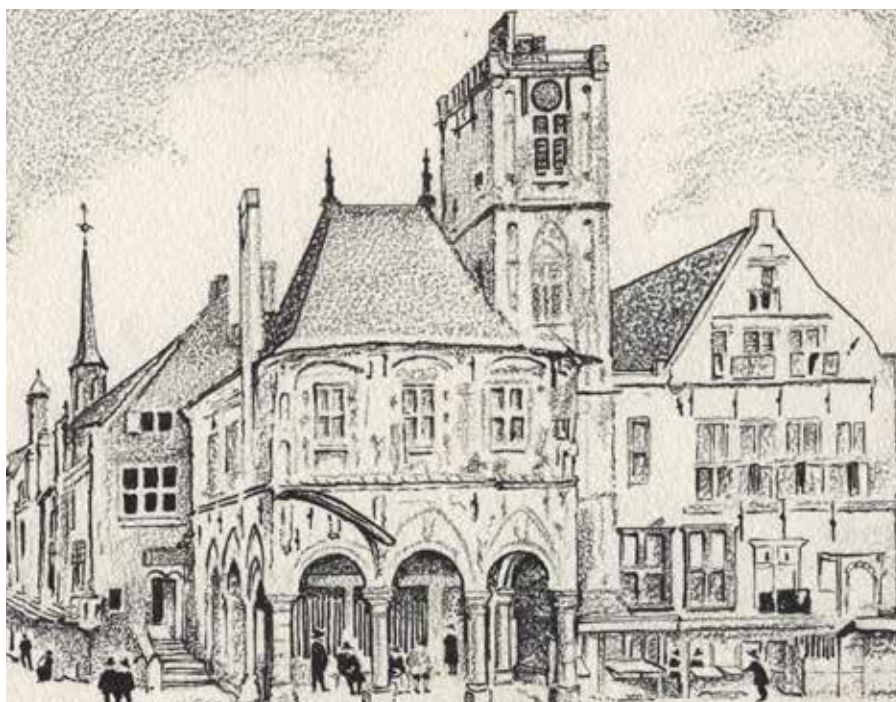
*John Gibson's 1867 Southampton branch of National Provincial Bank in about 1910.
The Royal Bank of Scotland Group plc © 2016.*

to understand the nature of the business it represented, and in banking that nature was sometimes elusive.

It is useful to compare banking with other ancient professions. Skating quickly over the one which Rudyard Kipling called the oldest in the world, perhaps doctors, lawyers and the clergy have the greatest claim to a long descent. But without being disparaging about lawyers and doctors, their building types have been relatively uncomplicated. Lawyers have had law courts (at various levels of seniority) and the medical profession can boast a range of purpose-built buildings over the last four centuries (e.g. lazzaretto, sanatorium, eye infirmary, general hospital). But such buildings are not ubiquitous

like banks, and they cater for the tribulations of life rather than service its normality. Ironically, churches are much closer to banks as a building type. The lines of descent from God and Mammon have a remarkable similarity.

In Europe, the two main religious traditions have been Roman Catholic and Protestant and the style of a church is tailored to the degree of embellishment consistent with the doctrine. At one extreme lies the Baroque tradition characterized, for example, by the rich interiors in churches of the Danube basin, and at the other end is the unadorned simplicity of a Calvinist or Methodist chapel. By the same token, there can be churches which are Romanesque, and others that are Gothic, a style which had



Town hall at the Dam. The Amsterdamsche Wisselbank was established in 1609 in the house on the right side of the town hall – on the corner of the Vogelsteeg. The entire block of buildings burnt down on July 7th 1652. Big sacks of money were thrown out on the street during the fire. © De Nederlandsche Bank.

a virtual grammar of ornamentation all to itself. In the same way, banks in one line of evolution have been grander than others. There have been private banks, merchant banks, savings banks, joint-stock banks, and national banks, and the style suited to one of those divisions might not fit the character of another. There are even sub-divisions, because the savings banks of Britain were wholly charitable, whereas the Sparkassen in German-speaking countries developed with a commercial function.

Also there have been purpose-built little banks and purpose-built big banks and what appears to have been simply a difference in size has usually reflected a diversity of purpose. Generally speaking, little banks have represented branches, retail banking, and the customer interface; big banks have stood for head office, in other words the co-ordination of branches, wholesale banking, and all the administrative machinery needed for running a public limited company, a *société anonyme*, or an *aktiengesellschaft*. This distinction is usually obvious to the on-looker, but that has not always been so.

Earlier purpose-built banks date from an era when the contrast between head office and the branch network did not apply because the latter, if it existed at all, was too

small to influence design. Banks, for reasons of travel, loyalty, confidence and the law (for instance, restrictions on the issue of banknotes) traded within a small geographical area, with one or a handful of branches (if any) easily accessible from the place where the business originated. Bankers instructed their architects to make each building an individual statement of the solidity of the firm, so no one building was conspicuously smaller or less grand than another. The main expense, however, was reserved for the office where the proprietors met to plan, report and account.

The concept of an in-house branch style is relatively modern – although perhaps more historic in England than elsewhere. The mid-19th century branches of the National Provincial Bank shared a certain affinity of grandeur, thanks to the architect John Gibson, but many could hardly be labelled as small. In the early 20th century, however, some companies, most noticeably the Midland Bank, built their minor branches in a consistent and harmonising style, imparting a kind of corporate uniform, almost to the extent that the name on the frieze was irrelevant.

A meaningful difference between premises is not, of course, something confined

to banking. Supermarkets, for instance, will have a large head office and smaller outlets, and there is the same functional dichotomy between them. Likewise, a chain of do-it-yourself or department stores will operate at two administrative levels, with buildings to match. But these represent shopping for material goods, whereas a bank markets an abstract commodity, where hard cash is almost a side-line. The retail side of banking (although recognised as a term) does not work in the High Street sense because banks, and for that matter insurance companies, do not market a product to put in the boot of one's car.

The point at which banking began in the history of civilisation is blurred. The Chinese produced bank notes, and other ancient cultures from the Middle East to Rome had systems for payments and credit. But the consensus is that modern principles derive from the Italian city states, and indeed the word bank derives from the *banco* – the counter where transactions were conducted. Renaissance bankers, such as the Medici, did not design purpose-built banks because their palazzi were adequate and, more importantly, because they were also merchants and politicians. This multi-activity characterized banking in Europe over



Former head office of the Union Bank of Scotland, 191 Ingram Street, Glasgow, as rebuilt in 1879. Courtesy of Lloyds Banking Group plc Archives.

two centuries, although individual bankers, such as Samuel Oppenheimer of Vienna (from whose tutelage sprang the Rothschild dynasty) helped the profession gain its individuality. The Bank of Amsterdam, founded in 1609, was the foreunner of the national banks, beginning another line of descent. In Britain there was a double complication: in London the profession grew from the livery company of Goldsmiths, while in the provinces, it was wealthy tradesmen, typically brewers, who earned enough money to give credit and make loans.

The architectural point about this tangled descent is that when banks began to be purpose-built, historical precedents were not necessarily suitable. The Renaissance had to be re-invented for banking – but at what level? The Banca Monte dei Paschi di Siena, for instance, was in a building well-known to later architects, but these monti di pietà represented a kind of pawnbroking, with the stress on beneficence rather than

profit. Furthermore the original building was Gothic, so if the motive of the Siena bank did not appeal to the new age of bankers, neither did its architecture. Gothic appealed to some British savings bankers, but they were just as likely to opt for a Neoclassical style, or even neo-Greek. Curiously, some very large Gothic-style commercial banks were built in the conurbations of Northern England, as a legacy of the peculiarly English ‘Battle of the Styles’ in 1857. The justification for that, in the eyes of George Gilbert Scott, was that banking was developing in Europe in the Middle Ages when Gothic architecture, broadly speaking, was the norm.

In the 18th century, tradition in England had been at variance with the Continent, and indeed with Scotland. When the goldsmiths of London developed into private bankers, the palazzo style was deemed the perfect representation of their values. Known in England as ‘Italaniate’, the style recreated the Palazzo Farnese of Rome and

the Palazzo Pandolfini of Florence in London and major cities. While those precedents had no particular banking connection, they had been used for gentlemen’s clubs in London’s West End and that was the clientele which the private bankers sought and supported. This was banking for the gentry and the needs of industry were not in the bankers’ minds. A private bank was a banking-house, the home of the proprietor. The British banker called his interview room ‘the parlour’, taken from the French parloir, as business was little more than a gentlemanly discussion. By comparison, the banker’s ‘shop’ where money was handled, was almost a term of disdain.

On the Continent at this period, private and merchant banks (the difference being less precise than in Britain) proliferated, but purpose-building was largely unnecessary. In big cities, existing grand buildings and town houses were adequate for business, a situation which never entirely ended. Thus in the



Antwerp Branch of Banque Nationale by Henri Beyaert. The the Antwerp branch was closed on 1st January 2014. The building has since been sold. © National Bank of Belgium.

19th century the Danish Handelsbank was happy to take over premises erected a century earlier in the Kongens-Nytorv in Copenhagen by C.F. Harsdorff, and the hôtels particuliers of Paris gifted the Hotel de la Vrillière, dating back to 1620, and later known as the Hotel de Toulouse, to the Banque de France. As for the private banker, a large part of his business was as much social as commercial so a domestic setting was appropriate. The European banker was a travel agent for the Grand Tourist, cashing his exchange notes, advising on places of interest, and effecting introductions. The banker most favoured by the British was Moritz von Bethmann at Frankfurt, entertaining visitors in his own house if only to show them the statue of Ariadne sitting on a tiger commissioned at huge expense from Dannecker of Stuttgart.

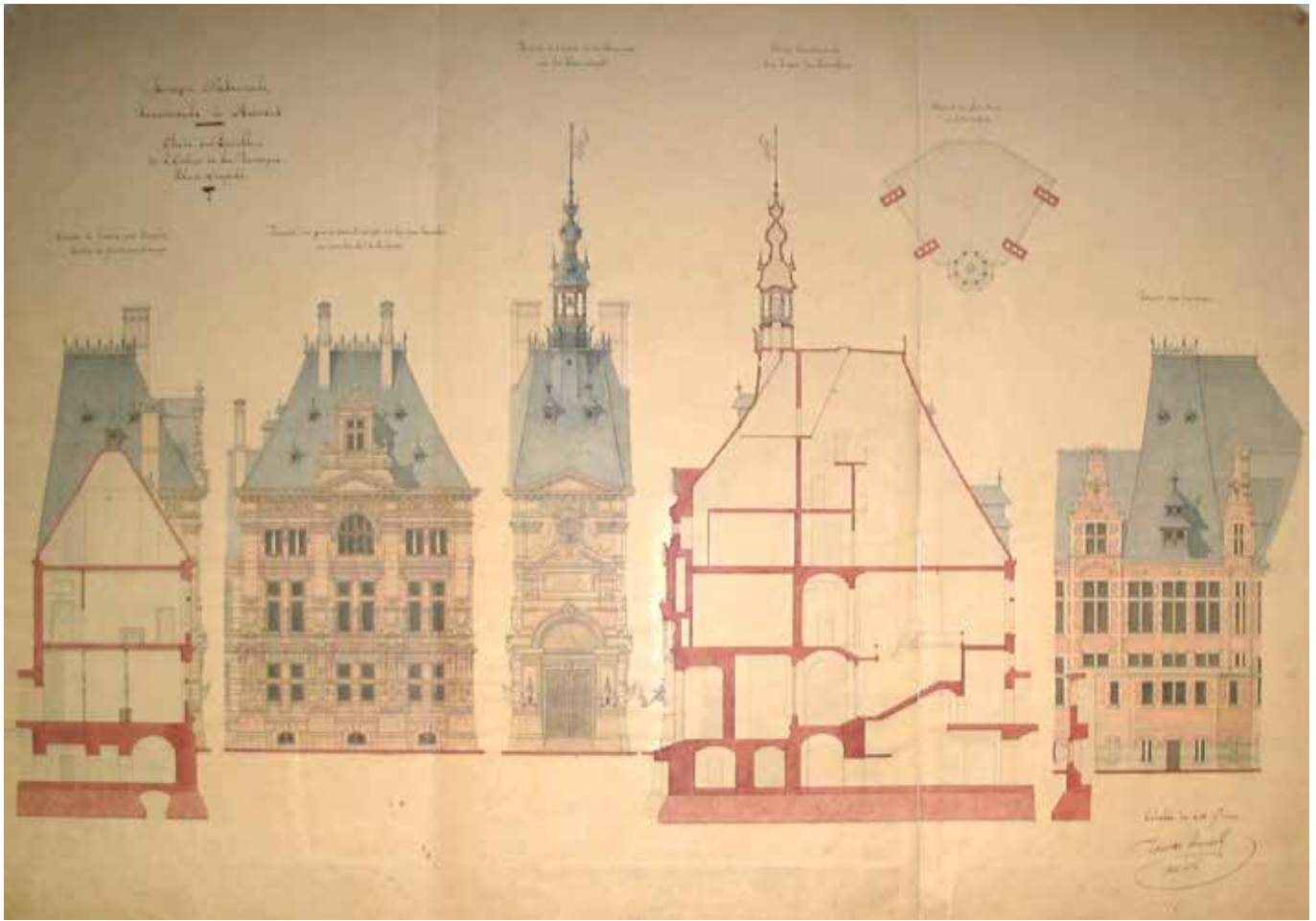
It was the 19th century before purpose-building of banks became common. The astyler palazzo design was too subdued to meet the competitive ethos which

motivated the new joint-stock banks and attention had already turned to Neoclassicism, influenced by Palladio's work in Vicenza. His Palazzo Thiene was the inspiration for many banks to have a ground floor of rusticated masonry imparting a sense of massive strength, alleviated by upper stories with superimposed orders, often Ionic and Corinthian. This enthusiasm for Palladio lasted nearly two hundred years. David Hamilton's Union Bank in Glasgow borrowed from the colonnaded Palazzo Chiericati in Vicenza - a faithful copy of which had been built in the suburbs of Hamburg in the 1790s by C.F. Hansen, another noted Danish architect, and pupil of Harsdorff. This villa was bought in 1897 by the Berenberg Gossler private bank, and was renamed the Gossler House. Thus Palladio was in favour, even in the era of Art Nouveau.

Another appropriate inspiration for architects was Venice, a by-word for mercantile prosperity and home of the Banco

di Giro. The work of Jacopo Sansovino was much favoured by later bankers and his Library of St. Mark was, curiously, a better precedent than his Zecca or mint next door, because it was less severe. The rich decoration in the frieze of the Library, which was unusually deep, tempted bankers in cities like Bristol and Belfast to exaggerate the embellishment of their buildings in an ostentatious display of wealth. More generally, Venice provided a show-case of palaces which encouraged architects towards eclecticism and polychromy. Whereas Palladio offered specific precedents, Venice provided something more abstract and exciting, a veritable source book from which architects could pick and choose their motifs.

The rise of the national banks gave even more scope for rich buildings, but not Venetian. The first Bank of England, designed by George Sampson (although the attribution is not conclusive) took a Palladian motif for what was essentially the entrance block, the



A study of the entrance of the Bank by Bekaert, December 1876. (coloured pen and ink drawing). © National Bank of Belgium.

only part visible from the street. Sampson's Bank, completed in 1734, was the first bank to be purpose-built in Britain, and was remodelled several times over the centuries. Most other National Banks in Europe were 19th century or later creations, when splendid buildings were the norm. In Brussels, for instance, Karl Baedeker noted the Banque Nationale, 'one of the best modern buildings in Brussels, designed by H. Beyaert and Janssens (1859-64), and exhibiting a free treatment of the Louis XVI style'. Baedeker was equally impressed by the bank's Antwerp branch, also by Beyaert, built in 1875-80 'in the Flemish Renaissance style'. In fact the branch borrows heavily from the Chateau de Chambord in the Loire Valley. Another memorable building was the Banco de España in Madrid, erected in 1884-91 to designs by Eduardo Adano and Severiano Sainz de la Lastra. In Sweden, the Riksbank gained new

premises in 1906 as part of a new parliament building, designed by Aron Johansson, again in Neoclassical style.

The first published ideas about what a bank should ideally look like came in 1849 from the British banker and theorist, J.W. Gilbart. He wrote that it 'should be a handsome building. The ... expenditure ... is no sin against economy: it is an outlay of capital to be repaid by the profits of the business that will then be acquired'. George Rae, another contemporary British banker, was more cautious: 'your customers will care little whether they approach your counter through a glass street door, or from beneath a Grecian portico. A certain air of sobriety is what should pervade a banking establishment'. It was a long time before architects joined in the debate. In 1881, after controversy over Baring's Bank designed by Norman Shaw in the City of London, the periodical *Building News* set

up a competition for the design of banks, but the entries showed more enthusiasm for the Arts and Crafts movement than for the environment within. It had been left to Gilbart thirty years earlier to argue for better light and ventilation, and few banks before the last century were even remotely comfortable for their employees.

Banks were now embroiled in a wider, philosophical debate about the meaning of architecture, which was to re-surface fifty years later. In the 1880s, for the first time, questions were being asked about the need to follow historical precedent, and whether the appearance of a bank should be radically different from that of any other building, whether commercial or domestic. Aspiring architects jostled to submit competitive designs for branches, some indistinguishable at first sight from a suburban villa, others offering a mish-mash of contemporary and prettified features which had nothing in

common beyond the rejection of traditional values – especially any hint of classical conformity. Fortunately for bankers, who were understandably bewildered, the fad for change was short-lived and before the end of the century it was business as usual for their architects.

The evolution of the insurance industry has many points in common with banking. The profession is very ancient; there has been the same process of amalgamations; branches or agencies have been widespread; and the business has required the same need to inspire confidence by its buildings. A company which assured your life, or placed a plaque on your house to confirm fire cover, would not weaken your confidence by trading from a mediocre office. The Amicable Assurance Society, founded in London 1706 and reputedly the earliest life assurer, opened new premises in 1793, designed by the wonderfully-named Ezekiel Delight. This handsome Palladian building inspired the Pelican Life Assurance Company to acquire the equally impressive ex-bank of Sir Charles Asgill in 1796, which had been purpose-designed by Sir Robert Taylor in around 1757. Neoclassical palaces then became as normal for insurers as they had been for bankers, and extended also to their branches. For instance, the Copenhagen branch of the Standard Life Assurance Company, as noted by Baedeker, was ‘showily built of Norwegian marble’, having been designed by Christian Arntzen in 1895.

It is tempting to imagine that the historical division in insurance (excluding shipping) between the offices of life and fire might be reflected in the design of their buildings. More precisely, a mutual business might have shown more restraint than a joint-stock company but only the most patient research would establish that. What is clear, however, is that within the mutual sector, Neoclassicism lost something of its grip. In 1879 the Prudential Assurance Company were responsible for the last great Gothic Revival building in central London. This romantic, red, terracotta-panelled Head Office was designed by Alfred Waterhouse, better-known for the National History Museum and Manchester Town Hall. As if in contempt of this flippancy, the Pearl Assurance Company, built a monumental new office in 1914, only half-a-mile away,

with all the trappings of the Belle Époque.

In the early 20th century, banks came under fire for too lavish expenditure on their premises. Much of this was half-hearted and made little impact, but when building resumed after World War One, and banks seemed locked into their Neoclassical tradition, there were two articulate critics from markedly different backgrounds. One was C.H. Reilly, professor of Architecture at Liverpool University, who was actually on the bankers’ side and helped them develop modern and original ideas. The other was Hilaire Belloc, the Anglo-French writer, traveller and politician, best-known perhaps as the author of cautionary rhymes for naughty children and *The Path to Rome*, the narration of a pilgrimage to consolidate his Roman Catholic belief. A more unlikely commentator on banks could scarcely be imagined.

In 1938, Belloc found himself at Elsinore in Denmark, overwhelmed by the beauty of the castle. This led him to ponder the contemporary architectural preoccupation with the ‘Theory of Function’, which held that beauty arose naturally if a building was true to its purpose – a concept he found distasteful and ‘asinine’. Somehow this led him to banking and to the conclusion, following this theory, that ‘a bank above ground should be all glass’ with ‘very private rooms’ for negotiation. Belloc lamented that banks would lose their decoration (therefore their overt beauty) but, alas, his regret was tempered by a political judgement ‘that banks were only beautiful because bankers hid their profits by giving a free range to their architects’. Only when this deceit was restricted, he reckoned, would ‘we find the stuff called modern’ in banking – which leaves the reader wondering whether he was really for it or against it.

Office architecture now, and for many years past, has reflected values which were not envisaged in 1938. The need to express the ‘essence’ of banking or insurance in the place of business has long gone. The challenge is rather to design a building which competes for admiration within the panorama of a district where the business of one profession is indistinguishable on the outside from that of another. And this can be done with great success. An early example was the design

by Joseph Wiedemanns for the head office of the Allianz Insurance Company at Munich, opened in 1954. More recently, the National Westminster Bank Tower by R. Seifert & Partners set a new benchmark for London. And, more recently again, the Commerzbank head office at Frankfurt, designed by Foster & Partners and opened in 1997, elevated banking, literally, to the highest pinnacle of the cityscape.

So Belloc was fretting in vain, as beauty per se was an irrelevance. Modernism had an irreversible momentum and the ‘Theory of Function’ could go out the window. ●

Literature & Sources

Most banks have helpfully produced a company history, or put pictures of their buildings on line. Among general, published sources, the following have been used above, and give the best historical and visual perspective:

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Bank Austria's historic headquarters in Vienna

Ulrike Zimmerl

On August 16, 1912 the Wiener Bank-Verein opened its Schottenring headquarters for business. Contemporaries praised the elegance and modernity of the building. It was hailed by experts and the general public as an architectural masterpiece, combining grandeur, stylistic perfection and high-level functionality. For many years the Wiener Bank-Vereins' new headquarters have provided a conceptual and architectural benchmark for other Viennese banks. Even nowadays, serving as headquarters of UniCredit Bank Austria, the building is still regarded as a prime example of bank architecture.

Finding a suitable site for its new headquarters proved a lengthy affair for the Wiener Bank-Verein. When a group of houses on the Schottenring covering a total area of 4,795 square metres came up for sale, the management lost no time in clinching the deal. Once the purchase of the plot of land off Schottenring was completed in May 1908 the Wiener Bank-Verein entered the planning phase. In mid-summer the management organised a call for tender; nine architects were invited. Ernst von Gotthilf and Alexander Neumann emerged victorious and were jointly commissioned with the execution and supervision of the project.

The construction of the building was completed within a relatively short period of time, which was made possible by the use of reinforced concrete. Differently from today, only the partition walls were made of reinforced concrete, while the supporting exterior walls towards the street and courtyard fronts were made of brickwork. Reinforced concrete was also used for the roof truss and the ceiling structures.

The house on the Schottenring also made use of cutting-edge technology. Electricity was supplied by the City of Vienna's power plants. Six file lifts and a pneumatic tube with more than 40 desk terminals built the backbone of the in-house communication infrastructure for the transport of



DIE BANK AM SCHOTTENRING

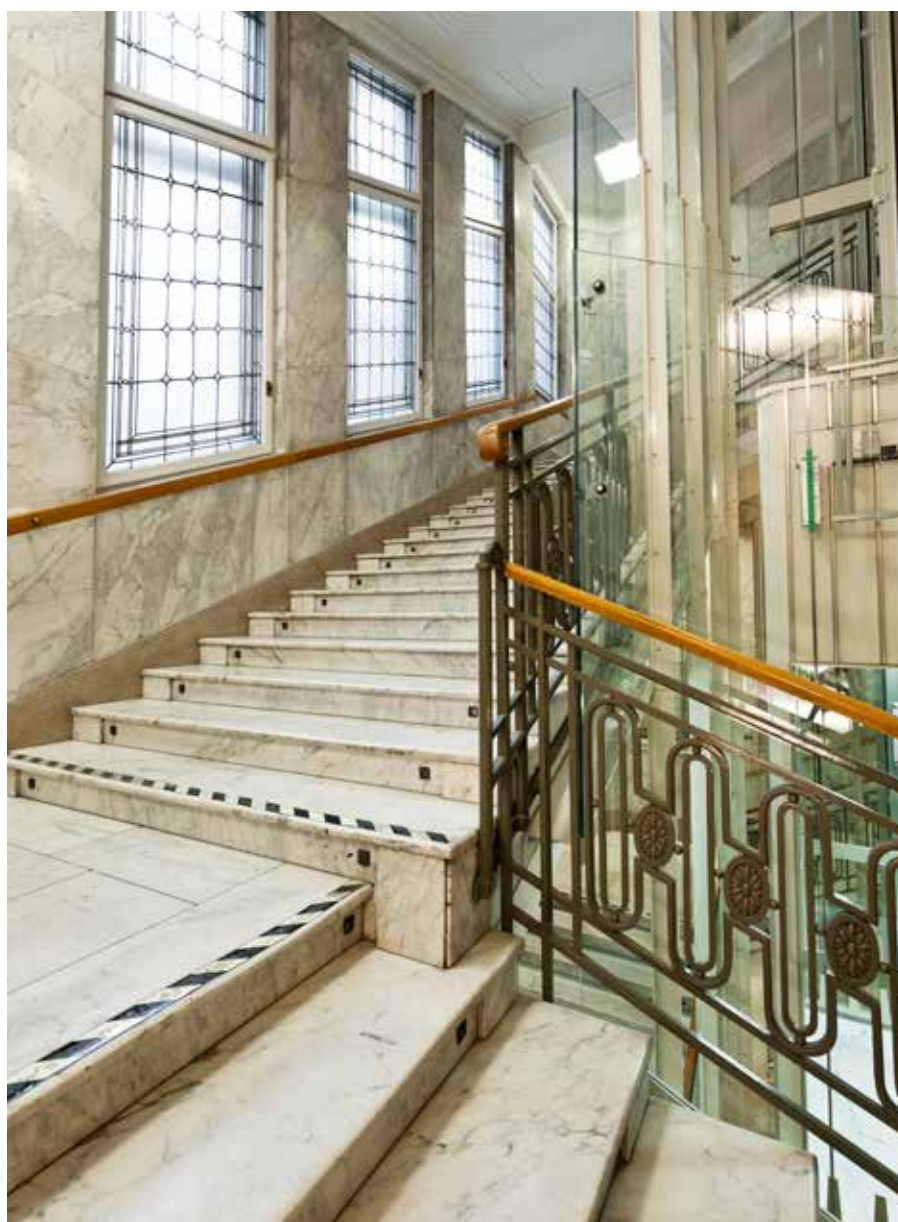
ULRIKE ZIMMERL

Book cover

Ulrike Zimmerl. *Die Bank am Schottenring*
Vienna-Köln-Weimar: Böhlau Verlag 2012.
Photography: Nick Albert.

documents and files. The institution's communication facilities also included a highly modern telephone system with a total of 329 extensions. It is quite interesting to notice that the Wiener Bank-Verein decided to put female operators in charge of its switchboard while Gotthilf and Neumann discovered during their study trip through Germany that the telephone systems of the visited banks were usually operated by men. Besides the very modern communication infrastructure the building was also equipped with an air-conditioning system way ahead of its time.

As far as stylistics is concerned the headquarters of the Wiener Bank-Verein represent a detached, secessionist-neoclassicist piece of architecture designed to impress by its aura of wealth and solidity. The façades immediately identify the building as a member of Ringstrasse architecture. At the beginning of the 20th century the bank still deliberately decided to stay within the tradition of an eclectic



Main staircase © Nick_Albert



Directors' floor, office of the CFO © Nick_Albert.



Directors' floor, Octagon, former general assembly hall © Nick_Albert.



External view, Schottengasse © Nick_Albert.

decorative historicism. The opulence of the architecture as well as the expensive decorations were ideally suited to reveal the bankers' commitment to a code of honesty and trustworthiness and their entitlement to status and leadership. Art-nouveau and Secessionist stylistic elements expressed the dynamism of the bank's business model and its innovative monetary policies.

The Main Customers' Hall marks the centre of the bank and serves as well as its 'point of sale' and 'visiting card'. Every detail of the Main Hall was designed for impressing customers. 'This main hall is among the biggest of its kind in Europe

and it is certainly the most spacious and beautiful of all institutions in Vienna', the Neue Freie Presse wrote a few days before the official inauguration of the building.

The first floor, with offices and various conference rooms designed for the bank's management shows the same distinguished stylistic criteria as the Main Hall. With a height of 4.50 metres the belvedere is significantly higher than the other floors. Its outstanding status has been further enhanced by excessive oak and marble panelling and elegant interior design.

In midsummer of 1912 the Wiener Bank-Verein's vision of its new

headquarters, meeting all the requirements of modern banking and at the same time reflecting its position and importance, had been fulfilled. In the end, the building's total cost amounted to 13,988,794 kronen, which, at that time, equalled the bank's average annual net profit.

For more than a hundred years the building has served as headquarters of Bank Austria and its predecessor institutes. However, in 2018 the bank will move its headquarters to a new campus, which is currently being built near the former Nordbahnhof in Vienna's 2nd District. ●

Space adventure. Moving to new headquarters is a test for Erste Group's corporate culture

Michael Mauritz

The rejection or neglect of common sense entails serious moral consequences. For generations common sense in the design and development of the headquarters of banks has been to demonstrate the safety and reliability of the institution by a very generous use of brick and mortar, concrete and steel, hectares of marble and tons of exotic timber.

But today no coherent argument can be derived from sheer exhibition of wealth or pretence. Confidence building is no longer achievable with the construction of high rises, the towers of Frankfurt. The City and the Street have become symbols of an industry of past rather than future glory, reminding us very much of the formerly proud towers of San Gignano.

Erste Group is a dedicated retail banking group. It has to convince its large portfolio of small and medium sized clients of its ability to continually provide innovative services while at the same time operating on a reasonable cost basis (thus consequently being able to offer their services at competitive prices). So when Erste Group, which has a strong foothold in eight CEE markets, decided to obtain new headquarters in Vienna, the challenge for the project was to follow a seemingly simple formula: More creativity, less cost.

Cost efficiency would be achieved by uniting staff, which had been working in more the 20 different locations scattered all around Vienna, in just one location and by applying state-of-the-art technology in a highly efficient building.

But how do you propagate creativity within an institution that is defined by rules of compliance rather than via the free-wheeling spirit of high-tech start-ups? There are two broadly competing narratives about how the idea of new headquarters evolved into the vision of Erste Campus, promoting team building.



Garden deck and courtyard. Erste Group © Christian Wind.

Was it the quest for a new, transparent and creative corporate culture, which dictated the need for an architecture, which promotes interdepartmental, informal communication and cooperation through open spaces and horizontal instead of vertical expansion? Or was it the openness of the architectural concept, which created the demand for not just moving people and files but for a transition in corporate culture at the same time?

What was first? The decision for a new physical centre or the push for a renewed entrepreneurial identity? Today we can look back on this question as a Good Problem to Have. In December 2015, the first departments of Erste Group in Vienna moved into the new Erste Campus, in March 2016, the tangible act of relocation was completed. Over more than two years the employees have been directly involved in the design of their new work spaces and – at the same time – have had the chance to prepare mentally for a world without corner offices (actually

no individual offices exist at all, not even for the nomenclature) and personally attributed desks. The transition has been set into movement and it definitely is no round-trip.

Erste Group staff will not just work in Erste Campus - they will develop ideas, make plans and translate visions into actions. For Erste Group, the new building is, first and foremost, the basis for a new working environment. The shorter distances between departments will encourage team building and help to increase productivity. Staff will find the new headquarters an inspiring and exhilarating workplace, promoting communication between individuals and teams and strengthening team cohesion. In order to translate this vision into reality, staff have been actively involved in workplace design.

It was particularly important to the architects of Erste Campus, Henke and Schreieck, that the staff of Erste Group should feel happy about coming into the office every day; that they should feel comfortable at their place of work; and that



Entrance and welcome desk. Erste Group © Christian Wind.



The curving architecture hugs the surrounding environment. Erste Bank Group © Christian Wind.

they should feel proud about working on Erste Campus.

The curving architecture hugs the surrounding environment and welcomes everybody who works at the Campus or visits it. Henke and Schreieck, the winners of a multi-step contest, intended to create an urban cityscape through the integration of green spaces and thus to provide a motivating atmosphere and a sense of well-being.

The individual buildings have been designed in such a way that changes to work processes or business areas, even retrospectively, can be accommodated at any time without any great structural alterations. What's more, the buildings have been designed to be barrier-free throughout.

The very highest of building standards will ensure economic viability and will thus lead to lower operating and energy costs. Through the use of new technologies and by offering service, leisure and shopping facilities in the publicly accessible areas, the Erste Campus offers more than just a pleasant working environment. Rather it offers an atmosphere, which will improve the quality of life and work. Working in a place where a high standard of work is expected and delivered every day should also be an enjoyable experience and linked to a modern, urban environment.

Through its location, Erste Campus embodies a very clear strategy - a conscious orientation towards Central and Eastern Europe.

The Erste Campus location at Vienna's new Hauptbahnhof (main railway station) is unique - it is one of the districts of Vienna which is most steeped in history. With cultural jewels such as the Belvedere Palace close by, this district stands for human achievement and economic progress. Even in the 19th century, the Südbahnhof railway station was not just the gateway to the south but also a military and a historical hub which held a particular attraction for many people

from all parts of the empire, with all their hopes and expectations.

It is easy to wax idealistically about a company's vision and mission. In the case of Erste Group the assessment, whether practice reflects theory or not, will soon be delivered in hard currency. Adaptability to a new working environment will doubtlessly mirror the same quality employees display toward the clients of the bank. If the employees on Erste Campus embrace the opportunities of their new workspace they should be prepared for the challenges of the changing environments on the market place. ●

Erste Campus at a glance. Facts and figures.

Client	Erste Group
Project developer	Erste Group Immorent AG
Facility management	Group Services/s OM
Architect	Henke Schreieck Architekten
Construction costs	max. EUR 300 million
Work stations for Erste employees	4,500
Additional area for offices and retail	2,000 m ² + 12,500 m ²
Surface area of property	25,000 m ²
Gross floor space	117,000 m ² (above ground)
Parking spots	approx. 600
Height	29-50 meters (7 to 13 upper floors, up to 3 lower floors)
Proximity to city center	2.5 km

Oesterreichische Nationalbank

200 years of architecture

Elisabeth Dutz

In June 1816, when Emperor Francis I established a 'national bank' that was to be financed and ultimately run by private stockholders—quite an innovation at the time. But the even bigger innovation was that this bank, called the 'privilegierte Oesterreichische National-Bank' (OeNB), would enjoy exclusive rights like a note-issuing monopoly. This was not only the start of 200 years of history of the institution 'Oesterreichische Nationalbank', but also of many special buildings, which were built by outstanding architects. The most important examples are:

Herrengasse 17

When the Stadtbanco facilities, where the Nationalbank initially was housed, became too small, a decision was made in April 1817 to buy and reconstruct the city residence of Count Liechtenstein on Schenkenstrasse (later renamed Bankgasse). But the building was soon found to be unsuitable for vault or safe custody services, leading to the purchase of premises at Herrengasse 32–34 with a view to erecting a new building on this site (today to be found at the address of Herrengasse 17/Bankgasse 1), subject to the constraint to 'handle cost effectively' and to 'avoid unnecessary luxury.'

Three architects were invited to participate in the project. Ultimately, Parisian-born Charles de Moreau (1758–1840) was entrusted with blueprint design, Raphael von Rigel with implementation planning, and Ernest Koch was put in charge of supervising works.

The construction of the new building, incidentally the first one in Vienna specifically designed to house a bank, began on Bankgasse in 1819, pending the purchase of the corner property on Herrengasse. The foundation stone was laid early in the second construction phase, on July 25, 1821, in a ceremony attended by the emperor.



Herrengasse 17 © OeNB.

Construction was completed in 1823, and the premises were opened on October 18 and 19. The construction cost about 1 million florins, of which just over 5% were used for artistic decoration. The Nationalbank's final report emphasizes that the style and design was simple but dignified, and that the building had been fitted with the newest technology, such as underground vaults, a freight elevator and a water pumping station.

Cubic style in early 19th century Vienna

The façade of the building features the

hallmarks of classicist design: strict symmetries, clear and highly compact structures underlining the unity of the façade, and a strong hierarchy in the horizontal layers of the building. The statuary adorning the pediment was designed by sculptor Josef Klieber (1773–1850), who also created the ensemble of statues for the Hall of the Muses in the Albertina Museum. When the building was converted in 1874, the front pediment and two pediments on the side facing Bankgasse were removed to make room for windows needed to improve lighting.

The building is, in fact, considered to have brought cubic style to early 19th-century Vienna. The character of the façade is, moreover, substantially defined by rows of arcades, which were a highly popular design element at the time and used on many public buildings, such as the Estates House ('Landhaus') of Lower Austria and the Austrian Mint.

Another feature element is the Palladian window above the portal on Bankgasse, named for the eminent Renaissance architect Andrea Palladio, who had popularized the style inspired by buildings in ancient Rome. Charles de Moreau chose a number of motifs inspired by the Italian Renaissance, as a reverence to the rise of banking in Renaissance Italy.

Palais Ferstel at Herrengasse 14

A shortage of space and the lack of separate premises for the Vienna Stock Exchange—makeshift housing arrangements for the stock exchange had been in place for years—motivated the bank to purchase the building across the street from Herrengasse 17 in 1855. The building, which was located at Herrengasse 14, next to Palais Harrach, belonged to the Counts Abensperg-Traun. The construction site was somewhat inconvenient, as care had to be taken to spare the immediately adjacent Palais Hardegg at the corner of Freyung and Strauchgasse. (In 1897 this building was bought and incorporated, too.) The new property was purchased not with the intention to give up the headquarters of the central bank at Herrengasse 17; much rather, additional office space was to be created and partly rented out to the stock exchange.

The Nationalbank organized a competition for architects won by 27-year-old Heinrich Ferstel (1828–1883), incidentally the son of a Nationalbank official. In the same year, Heinrich Ferstel also won the competition to build the Votive Church, the first of the imposing Ringstrasse buildings, which was to keep him busy for some 25 years.

Ferstel was also entrusted with supervising the construction of the new building for the Austro-Hungarian Bank and for the stock exchange. Much like his predecessor 35 years earlier, the Austro-Hungarian Bank's governor, Joseph Ritter von Pipitz, called for 'strict adherence to economy and

avoidance of worthless luxury ... to achieve solidity and artistic as well as technical perfection.' Construction work began in 1856 and was concluded in 1860. However, just nine years later, the stock exchange was practically bursting at the seams and was finally relocated to a dedicated Ringstrasse building in 1877.

From the outset, the new bank building had been conceived for various uses. The construction was designed to be open and accessible rather than closed and forbidding, as a tribute to the thriving economy. The building was to be used by the bank and the stock exchange, and it was to house shops and a café whose first leaseholders were the Pach brothers. In 1868 the café became the famous Café Central, which came to be the preeminent Vienna fin-de-siècle café to which artists and literati alike flocked. Today the building at Herrengasse 14 goes by the name of its architect and is known as Palais Ferstel.

Romantic Historicism emulating Italian palazzi

Heinrich Ferstel sought inspiration from impressions gained during his travels to Italy and possibly also from art critic John Ruskin's newly released book *The Stones of Venice*. He designed the building with a mixture of elements of Venetian and Florentine Trecento architecture. Regarded as one of the landmarks of Romantic Historicism, it was the most modern building in Vienna at the time.

The façades and all façade decorations feature ashlar masonry, also referred to as dressed stone—large, rectangular blocks of stone, at the time long out of use in Viennese architecture. The architect gave priority to 'authentic' materials and flawless craftsmanship.

The most striking features include the large former stock exchange trading floor on the first floor, with an English-style open truss roof, and the compelling grand staircase. On the ground floor, a covered shopping arcade leads to a hexagonal courtyard covered by a glass dome, with a fountain adorning the courtyard. The floor plan with its clever design solution where Herrengasse and Strauchgasse form an acute angle resulted in the unconventional and refreshing interior layout. Heinrich Ferstel developed not only the architectural construction



Palais Ferstel at Herrengasse 14 © OeNB.

but also the interior design to make the building a whole a piece of art in itself, a *Gesamtkunstwerk*.

The windows, doors and ceilings of the great halls were made of oak. The purpose of the stucco, frescos and the ornate wrought ironwork was to emphasize the noble character of the building; the same was true of the furniture, textiles and leather wallpaper. The General Council meeting room was fitted with a fireplace made of green, white and black-patterned Nero Portoro marble from Porto Venere in Italy. Oil paintings by Franz Josef Dobiaschovsky and a pearwood bas-relief with motifs celebrating the creation of the Nationalbank, executed by Joseph Gasser, adorned the walls. The stairwell was decorated with frescos by Carl Geiger, and the commodity exchange trading floor was embellished with stucco bas-reliefs by Franz Melnitzky.

Head Office at Otto Wagner-Platz 3

Since the 1823 inauguration of the first Nationalbank building at Herrengasse 17, the Bank had expanded greatly. Several properties had been additionally purchased, including the central bank and stock market building at Herrengasse 14. Space was again becoming scarce at the start of the 20th century. When plans to obtain the Palais Harrach at Freyung Square did not work out, the

decision was made to relinquish the properties on Herrengasse and the surrounding area and to rebuild the bank from scratch, including a separate facility for banknote printing, on the grounds of the Alser Barracks on Alserstrasse in Vienna's ninth district. The property, which comprised an area of more than 16,900 m², had been purchased for 3.5 million crowns in 1909 from the City of Vienna.

Architectural competition

In 1910, 14 architects from Vienna, Budapest and Prague were invited to take part in a competition. The objective was to select the architect who would be most likely to incorporate historic traditions in the design of the bank. Those architects were Leopold Bauer, Ludwig Baumann, Max von Ferstel, Ernst von Gotthilf-Miskolczy, József Hubert, Kármán & Ullmann, Flóris Nándor Korb, Jan Kotera, Franz Krauss and Baron Josef von Tölk, Alexander Neumann, Friedrich Ohmann, Samuel Pecz, Emil Töry and Mórícz Pogány, and Alexander Wielemans. Interestingly enough, the list did not include Otto Wagner, Vienna's most renowned and innovative architect at that time. Submissions from three architects made it to the final selection round (Leopold Bauer, Flóris Nándor Korb and Ludwig Baumann). The commission ultimately went to Leopold Bauer of Silesia (1872–1938).

In May 1911 work started on the demolition of the Alser Barracks. By 1912, Leopold Bauer had created nearly 20 different designs for the bank, which was to front onto Alserstrasse. A banknote printing facility was to be constructed behind the building, i.e., separated by Schwarzschanerstrasse, with a bridge connecting it to the main bank building. The architect referred to the frugality of the design as a key element of 'true' art. Only the main façade on Alserstrasse was to be artistically elaborate. The three side façades and all four façades of the printing facility were to be kept as simple as possible, with form following function.

To gain ideas and inspiration for his design of the Austro-Hungarian Bank, Leopold Bauer inspected several prominent bank buildings in other countries, either directly on location or by reviewing the blueprints. In the tender specification, he noted that not a single building existed that could have served as a model for a central bank, echoing the very



Head Office at Otto Wagner-Platz 3 © OeNB.

words Ignác Alpár had used nearly 10 years prior with respect to the Budapest building.

History of the construction project

After the building permit was issued in 1913, construction of the new Austro-Hungarian Bank became Leopold Bauer's most important project. When he took over for Otto Wagner as professor of modern architecture at the Vienna Academy of Fine Arts in November 1913, Bauer noted in his inaugural speech that he intended to instruct his students directly at the construction site. He in fact succeeded in having the school of architecture situated next to his private studio at Garelligasse 3, right next to the building site.

Construction started with the banknote printing facility (today the main OeNB building). The grand banking palace on Alserstrasse was never built.

The building project made good progress until the summer of 1914. After mobilization of the army, construction was halted for the first time on 31 July 1914. Work continued from 17 August 1914, onward, but with only a fraction of the original manpower. By 1915 two stories had been constructed. That year also saw the addition of the main entry boasting a large-scale relief by Othmar Schimkowitz—who had previously collaborated with Otto Wagner in

building the Postsparkasse and the Church of St. Leopold. Construction was only sporadic as the year advanced, however. In 1917 the number of available workers diminished even more, and the project came to a near standstill. The only work still being carried out was limited to preserving the shell structure and preventing weather damage.

Once the war was over, work on the project gradually recommenced. The plans were modified multiple times, but the building interior was never completed. Leopold Bauer still hoped in 1919 that the banking palace, with its imposing towers, as well as the printing facility would still come to fruition under his direction. However, the central bank cancelled its contract with Leopold Bauer on 8 December 1922.

One of the practical priorities of the Oesterreichische Nationalbank, once it had become operational on January 1, 1923, was to seek suitable premises where the different departments, which were located in various buildings on and around Herrengasse in the first district, could be housed under one roof.

The original plan of constructing new headquarters for the OeNB between the printing works building—of which only the shell had been completed during World War I—and Alserstrasse could not be carried out.

Instead, the printing facility would be converted to house both plant and office areas. When the work began in 1923, the building had hardly changed from the unfinished state it had been left in 1917. Rather than commissioning Leopold Bauer, the original architect of the building, with the project, the bank chose two staff architects who had already worked for the Austro-Hungarian bank before the war: Rudolf Eisler (1881–1977) and Ferdinand Glaser (1880–1961). Apparently the expectation was that architects who were familiar with the bank's needs would be able to facilitate a fast and economical conversion.

Additionally, representative rooms were built, including a teller lobby, the meeting room of the General Council, a library and offices and reception rooms for the bank's top managers. Famous cabinetmakers of the day, including Portois & Fix, J. W. Müller, Bernhard Ludwig, Járay, Bothe & Ehrmann and Schönthaler, were involved in furnishing the building.

Following completion of the conversion works in a mere 21 months, the inauguration ceremony of the new bank building was held on Sunday, 22 March 1925, with Federal President Michael Hainisch in attendance. Other high-ranking attendants included the minister of finance, a number of current and former ministers and city councilors, and representatives of the banking world.

The square that had originally been intended as the location of the OeNB's head office remained empty. Shortly before the inauguration ceremony, it was named Otto-Wagner-Platz, which is somewhat ironic given that Leopold Bauer had come to oppose the theories of his erstwhile teacher Otto Wagner.

Money Center at Garnisongasse 15

Over the years it had become increasingly difficult to conduct printing operations in the OeNB's main building efficiently and according to modern standards. This prompted the OeNB in 1989 to acquire a 10,500 square-meter plot situated on the grounds of the former General Hospital and located close to the OeNB's main building. Since the old hospital structures in this specific area were not considered historic monuments, their preservation was not mandated and they could thus be demolished.

The new building, known today as



Money Center at Garnisongasse 15 © OeNB.

the Money Center, was designed to house the banknote printing works and all banknote production security and R&D units, the IT department and the cashier's division. At one point, a green space outside the city center had been considered a good location, but it was ultimately determined that the new premises should be situated near the OeNB's main building, since the close proximity would facilitate better coordination.

In 1991, ten distinguished architects were invited to take part in the architectural competition for the building's design. The jury eventually selected the design submitted by Wilhelm Holzbauer (born 1930).

Construction began in late 1993, and a year later, on 28 October 1994, the cornerstone ceremony was held. A time capsule containing artifacts such as construction plans, a series of banknotes and several contemporary documents was incorporated within the building's foundation. The topping-out took place in fall 1995. The OeNB's main building and the Money Center are connected by a tunnel running roughly three stories beneath a section of the former hospital complex, which today is part of the University of Vienna campus.

The first OeNB business areas began relocating to their new spaces in late 1997, and the Money Center was officially

inaugurated on 19 July 1998—just in time to print the new euro banknotes using the state-of-the-art technology available in the new premises.

As part of the 'Kunst am Bau' percent-for-art program, artist Florian Schaumberger (born 1962) won a competition for the design and installation of a site-specific sculpture in the forecourt of the Money Center. Based on his design entitled 'Euro 2000' and completed in 1997, this sculpture is one of the most monumental public-space artworks in Vienna. The material chosen for the design—chrome-nickel steel—was provided by Waagner-Biró, an Austrian steel engineering company.

In the artist's words, 'An embodiment of constant purposeful change, conveyed through the concave-convex ascent of the beams with their dynamic, upward-striving movement symbolizing optimism, strength and shared success, it does not seek to fit into the architectural frame but rather provide a counterpoint to its severe structure. The transparency created by the voids in the sculpture allows the viewer to see through and beyond it, evoking a sense of almost playful lightness.' ●

The architectural history of the National Bank of Belgium

Marianne Danneel and Marisa De Picker

The history of the premises of the National Bank of Belgium reflects the Bank's metamorphosis from the issuing and discount institution created in the mid 19th century to the modern central bank which the Bank gradually became in the course of the 20th century. In the past 155 years the National Bank of Belgium has acquired an impressive set of buildings for its Brussels head office: from the classical bank edifice in the rue du Bois Sauvage to the modernistic functional building in the boulevard de Berlaimont. Despite the great difference in style, the architecture of both these buildings conveys the essential objectives of a central bank: solidity, stability and security as a means of obtaining the public's confidence in the institution and its activities.

A central bank for Belgium

The industrial revolution and the emergence of the banking system in Belgium are two inseparable phenomena. In 1830 Belgium was the most industrialised country on the European continent. In the period 1830-1848 a very small number of banks financed the Belgian industrial revolution. Each of them had the right to issue paper money.

On two occasions, in 1838 and in 1848, a political and economic crisis led to a run on the two major banks: the Société Générale and the Banque de Belgique. Savers withdrew their money en masse and demanded silver and gold coins in exchange for their banknotes. The government was forced to intervene and the principle of compulsory tender – i.e. the suspension of the right to exchange banknotes for precious metals – was imposed.

It was clear that the country needed a central bank which would end the proliferation of banknotes, restore confidence and maintain stability. In 1850, following



The 19th century Hôtel of the National Bank of Belgium is a fine example of neo-classical, eclectic architecture. © NBB.

negotiations with the government, the private banks waived their right of issue together with certain discount activities in favour of a new institution, the National Bank of Belgium.

The National Bank of Belgium was soon considered throughout 19th-century continental Europe as an almost perfect example of an issuing bank, and various other countries modelled their own institutions upon its statutes and organisation, and they also copied its architecture.

The 19th century bank edifice

It all began fairly modestly in 1850. After renting premises for a brief period, the Board of the National Bank bought a mansion with a courtyard to accommodate the Bank's offices together with the Governor's official residence. Eventually that proved to be far too

cramped. There was barely enough space for the customers, who had to queue outside, sometimes in the rain.

From 1857 onwards the Bank was actively looking for larger and more prestigious accommodation in a suitable neighbourhood. In 1859 the Board was able to purchase some properties on the rue du Bois Sauvage, next to Saint Michael's Cathedral, with the aim of constructing its new headquarters on the site. A design competition was held, with a small number of architects competing for the commission. The architects Henri Beyaert (1823-1894) and Wynand Janssens (1827-18..) who had submitted a joint bid, won the contract for the new bank edifice, including the governor's residence known as the Hôtel. Of the two architects, it seems that Henri Beyaert was the dominant figure.

The Beyaert-Janssens plan was a simple, rational design. The architects made great use of quadrilateral symmetry. Their plan was for two parallel wings connected by two transverse links. At the front, behind the façade, were the governor's residence and private office, the boardroom and the general assembly room. The Bank's offices, the central cash office and the collection office were located in the parallel rear wing. The two wings were connected by two transverse elements, conceived as circulation zones, the whole thus enclosing a central court in the middle. Work had already started by late 1860, but due to disagreements on artistic aspects between the architects and the Bank, the building progressed agonisingly slowly. It was 1865 before the banking and administrative services could move into the new premises; it was to be another two years before they were joined by the governor, together with his family and staff, and it took until 1874 to complete the decoration of the Hôtel. Beyaert was a perfectionist, and Beyaert and Janssens' continual negotiations with artists and craftsmen for the decoration and the interior details were very time-consuming. The sculptors they commissioned, for instance, could never start working on the actual sculptures right away. They had to create plaster models first and obtain the approval of Beyaert and the Board. The long wait for completion was also due to the various modifications demanded by the Bank. Some parts of the original plans were considered too 'exuberant' and others not luxurious enough. The first Governor, Philippe de Haussy (1850-1869), played a prominent role in every aspect of the building process. Detailed correspondence between him and the architects is preserved in the National Bank's archives.

The Hôtel of the National Bank of Belgium is an exquisite example of neo-classical, eclectic architecture with a clear French - and particularly Parisian - influence. Eclectic architecture sought to adorn a building's original, basic structure with elements drawn from diverse historical periods. It strove to erect monuments rather than mere buildings, and was imperiously didactic in intent.

The Hôtel's façade is a fine example of this eclectic movement. It is strictly symmetrical in composition, extending between two projecting elements - the public entrance on



The red salon was part of the governor's private quarters on the first floor of the Hôtel. © NBB.

the one side and the carriage entrance to the governor's residence on the other side -, surmounted by pediments and adhering totally to the sacred canons of classical proportion. Two caryatids frame each of the projections, symbolising commerce, industry, agriculture and the fine arts, 'the principal sources of public prosperity' according to the architects in a letter to the governor in 1863. The façade is monumental in every aspect and richly adorned with symbols of industrial progress, wealth and economic activities such as a beehive, the bow of a boat, a dynamo and a locomotive. The façade conveyed a sense of balance, solidity and confidence to a public still shaken by the banking crises of recent decades. Indeed, these were the very virtues that would ensure the success of its principal product, the banknote.

Today, the greater part of the 19th century bank edifice has disappeared, with the exception of the governor's residence and the public entrance hall. Fortunately, photographs and plans of the building have been preserved, showing us what the 19th century offices and public areas looked like; in contrast to the 'classical' building materials and style used by the architects in the governor's residence, the iron frames and galleries together with the vaults and glass ceilings and windows give the central cash office building and the other offices a surprisingly modern aspect. Fortunately, the governor's residence was saved from demolition and

the Bank's governors continued to live there until 1957. It provides an inside view of Belgian high society and its ideology and aspirations in one of its most dynamic periods.

Like the façade, the interior decoration of the Hôtel is lavish and full of symbolic and allegorical elements. The imposing doors of the entrance lead into the first of three rooms on the ground floor accommodating the governor's office, the boardroom and the general assembly room. These three rooms were conceived as a whole. Matching seats, fine chandeliers and imposing dark oak panels: the decoration of the three rooms displays a perfect continuity. Beyaert designed most of the furniture for the Hôtel himself, including the desk in the governor's office.

Outside the governor's office the majestic marble staircase leads to the state rooms and the governor's private quarters on the upper floors: a succession of five salons - the Aubusson room, the red salon, the green salon, the small dining-room and the music room -, a smoking room and a winter garden on the first floor and bedrooms and living quarters on the second floor. The domestic staff had rooms in the attic. The salons are decorated in warm and light pastel tones, and tapestries and draperies are abundant.

But without any doubt the centrepiece of the governor's residence is the ballroom - the *salle des fêtes* - next to the salons. The room still overwhelms visitors with its imposing bronze chandelier, exuberant



The modernistic, mid-20th century bank building . © NBB



A wrought iron gallery overlooks the banking hall at the UCB. © NBB

allegorical paintings on the ceiling and walls, the exquisite parquet and magnificent tableware. The ballroom quickly became the preferred location for official ceremonies and top-level meetings. It has witnessed all the important milestones in Belgium's monetary and financial history in which the National Bank was a partner and a player.

Since both the activities and the staff of the Bank were constantly expanding, the architect Beyaert was asked to extend the headquarters for the first time in 1871. Once again, the construction work did not advance as quickly as expected. The Bank was built on an area of flat land, against the side of the hill that rises from the shores of the Senne to the plateau of the upper town. This unstable ground presented a real challenge. At the beginning of the 20th century, a new wing designed by architect Louis Derycker was added to Beyaert's buildings, but the Bank continued to suffer from a shortage of space.

The modernistic, mid-20th century bank building

Following his appointment in 1938, governor Georges Janssen (1938-1941) initiated plans for new, larger buildings for the Bank's printing works and offices; the construction of the north-south rail link was the perfect catalyst. The architect commissioned to design these buildings was Marcel Van Goethem (1900-1960). The original building plans were

already approved in January 1940. They involved two separate main buildings which would be connected by an underground cellar system.

In 1948, work began on the construction of the new building. During the war, the architect Van Goethem had further elaborated his plans and at the same time he had thoroughly studied the design of other national banks such as the Bank of England and the Banque de France. In his original plan, Van Goethem opted for demolishing the entire 19th century bank edifice and using the vacant space to extend the modern head office. Only the governor's residence and the offices built by Derycker escaped demolition.

In strict conformity with his modernist views, Van Goethem dismissed any reference to earlier styles and preferred a clear building structure that expressed monumental dignity and functionality rather than elaborate ornamentation. The architect was in favour of 'une architecture monumentale ordonnancée', which passers-by could admire in full perspective without feeling the need to step back.

It took no less than ten years to build the new head office, with construction work carried out in phases so as to allow the employees to continue working throughout the project. The final result is a huge, monumental building covering the entire length of the boulevard de Berlaimont. While the monumental character of the architecture expresses

the solidity and importance of the institution, a number of distinctive security features such as the blind walls – the building has only one main, almost hidden entrance, protected by an iron latticework – and the colonnade in front of the façade accentuate the confidence inspired by the guardian of the currency.

Inside, the banking hall comprises two extremely large rooms about 200 metres long and more than eight metres high, separated by a central staircase. These rooms feature two rows of columns echoing the ones on the main façade of the building. They are fitted with what was modern lighting for those days, consisting of fluorescent tubes. A lightly vaulted ceiling rests on the double colonnade. Located beneath two massive glass and metal roofs, the ceiling is made of more than 9000 squares of translucent white polycarbonate which act as light boxes improving the daylight. The banking hall is therefore constantly bathed in natural light which varies in intensity according to the seasons and the weather.

Originally, the Bank's modern building caused a lot of controversy and it divided public opinion. People reproached the Bank for a megalomaniac attitude. Today, we see that the protest was only a fleeting phase and that the Bank's building now attracts the attention of every passer-by.

In recent decades, aspects such as information and computer technology, security and efficiency have become increasingly



The banking hall of the modernistic building bathes in natural light. © NBB.



The building of the former Union du Crédit de Bruxelles (UCB) will house the new museum of the National Bank of Belgium. © NBB.

important in the Bank's building and renovation programme. At the same time the Bank decided to renovate the 19th century governor's residence and to restore the glass roof of the Van Goethem building, taking account of today's energy standards. Finally, in 1979, the Bank also acquired the former, 19th century premises of the commercial bank Union du Crédit de Bruxelles (UCB) just around the corner from its own head office.

The UCB building

The interior of the UCB building with its decor largely inspired by classical styles is an outstanding example of late 19th century bank architecture. It was designed by architect Désiré De Keyser (1823-1897) and was built between 1872 and 1874. One enters the building through a long arched corridor opening up to a majestic staircase with bronze chandeliers cast by the famous Belgian Compagnie des Bronzes. At the end of the corridor is the great hall. The interior windows reach a height of almost 18 metres at their highest point. They take the form of a barrel vault in which the glass panes are supported by a steel structure. Next to the main hall is a smaller banking hall, which is lit by an oval window, and a wrought iron railing runs along beneath it. The quality of the subtle decoration is remarkable.

Today, the Scientific Library of the National Bank is located in the building. In the near future it will accommodate the Bank's new museum.

Conclusion

The architectural history of the National Bank of Belgium reflects the Bank's expansion and its changing activities and duties. But the Bank's premises - from the monumental 19th century bank edifice to the modernistic 20th century building - also convey a clear message of confidence, stability and security. In the 19th century the National Bank of Belgium was seen as a perfect model for the architecture of several other central banks in continental Europe. Today, the institution still tries to set an example by adapting its buildings to the new environmental and energy standards and by carefully restoring its architectural heritage. ●

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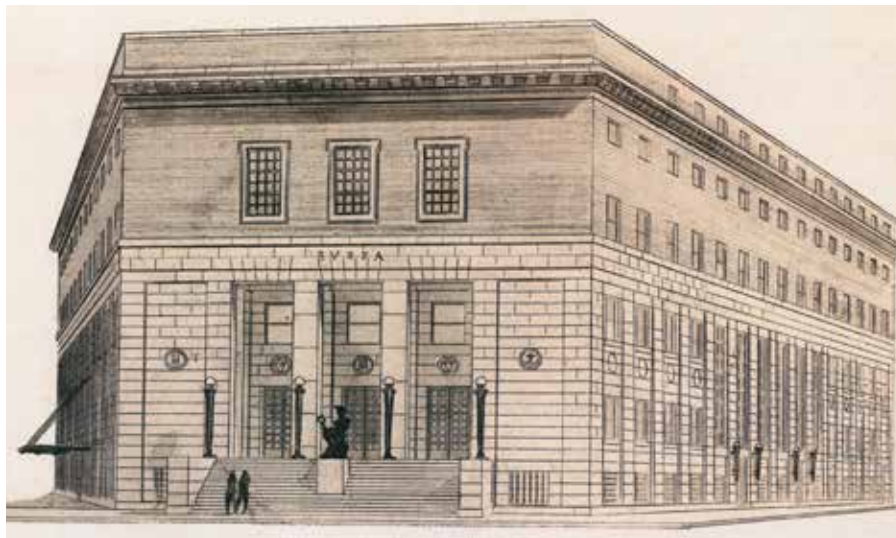
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The Croatian National Bank in the Zagreb Stock Exchange building

Ines Merkl

The seat of the Croatian National Bank is at Trg hrvatskih velikana in the centre of Zagreb.¹ The building in which the central bank is situated is a protected cultural property and the most renowned work of architect Viktor Kovačić. The impressive palace was erected to accommodate the Zagreb Stock and Commodity Exchange, while the central bank began using the building as its seat after the end of World War II. The story of the Zagreb Stock and Commodity Exchange Palace is closely connected to the establishment and work of the Stock Exchange itself. Although it is 1907, the year of the establishment of the Stock and Commodity Exchange Department under the auspices of the Chamber of Commerce that is usually perceived as the year of establishment of the Stock Exchange, in fact, it was officially founded in 1918.²

The Stock Exchange was initially located in the building of the Chamber of Commerce, where the Chamber of Commerce leased a large hall to the Stock Exchange for stock exchange meetings and a room for the office. The Chamber of Commerce used the same hall as its principal club-room and coffee house. The members of the Chamber of Commerce were known to enter the hall before all stock exchange transactions had been closed. 'Regardless of everything else, this combination of stock exchange and coffee house is neither appropriate nor good, giving the broader public that often have very vague and incorrect ideas about stock exchange and its importance completely wrong impressions and judgment of the stock exchange institution', the General Secretary of the Zagreb Stock and Commodity Exchange wrote at the time.³ Stock exchange transactions increased in that period, as did the number of its members, making the space used by the Stock Exchange insufficient within a short period of time.⁴



Viktor Kovačić's competition design, 1921, HR-DAZG 1, GPZ GO, 349. © State Archive Zagreb.



Viktor Kovačić's competition Design, 1921, HR-DAZG 1, GPZ GO, 349. © State Archive Zagreb.

palace built. In November 1920, the Zagreb Stock Exchange purchased land from the city: a construction site of triangular shape located at the very end of Jurišićeva Street, at the intersection of Martićeva Street and Račkoga Street.⁵ Today the location is situated in the Zagreb city centre. However, in the 1920's it was located in the eastern outskirts of the city and was used for city fairs. The 1920's were the time of the city's expansion and the construction of the Stock Exchange marked the start of the development of the new business centre of the city.

The Stock Exchange began with plans immediately. It was decided that the best design be selected on the basis of a competition inviting architects Viktor Kovačić, Aladar Baranyai, Ignjat Fischer, Bruno Bauer, Laza Dungjerski and Jože Plečnik to submit their proposals.⁶ Jože Plečnik, a Slovenian architect living in Prague at the time, declined the invitation. The reasons for his decision are not recorded, although an anonymous author of an article published in 1921 in a Croatian newspaper claimed that Plečnik agreed with the opinion of the Association

of Yugoslav Engineers and Architects, which had demanded that the competition be open to the general public competition. All experts from the country should be able to take part.⁷ There were indeed protests from the Association.⁸ Yet the Stock Exchange decided to continue with the competition amongst the five selected architects.

The jury selected Viktor Kovačić's solution as the best design. The building was to have the façade built of stone on the first floor and of brick in the rest of the building. The main entrance was defined by a high stairway and tall columns. Kovačić also planned that a sculpture be positioned on top of the stairway. He envisioned the most important room in the building, the stock exchange hall, as a circular room with the dome supported by caryatides.

Herman Muthesius, a German architect acting as the head of the jury, explained that the proposal was characterised by great clarity. He also praised: the design's good and quick access to and from the stock exchange hall; the architectural conception of the building's external appearance as well as its interior; and, above all, the possibility of easy construction.⁹

It is worth noting that Kovačić took the entire urban complex into consideration, proposing the construction of another building as a twin to his Stock Exchange building. The two buildings were supposed to form a symmetrical portal leading to the new part of the city.¹⁰ Although the 1920 plans for the development of this new business part of the city never came to fruition, architect Aladar Baranyai constructed the twin building, the House of Engineers and Technicians in 1927, according to Viktor Kovačić's competition design.

The Stock Exchange Council and Secretary's Office sent architect Viktor Kovačić and the General Secretary on a study visit in 1922. Thus Kovačić visited the stock exchange buildings in Vienna and Berlin during his journey.¹¹ When he returned, after consulting the Stock Exchange Management Board and taking Herman Muthesius's comments into account, Kovačić completed a new design according to which the building was ultimately constructed. One of the most notable changes was the new façade design that gave the building a more classical look.

After Viktor Kovačić's death on 21 October 1924, Hugo Ehrlich, Kovačić's former



Today's Croatian National Bank; photo by Božidar Bengesz.

business partner, took over the work on the construction, accompanied by architects Alfred Albini and Mladen Kauzlarić. They completed the interior of the building. Particular attention was paid to the building's furnishings: the furniture, light fixtures and balustrades on the staircases and the gallery of the main stock exchange hall were designed especially for the building.

Today, the building is recognisable for its façade made of the famous white stone from the island of Brač. The main façade is emphasized by four tall Ionic columns, which rest on a classical base and carry a simple cornice, resembling a Greek temple.

The monumental appearance that characterizes the façade continues into the entrance area as well. The area has the shape of a tall vestibule with a coffered ceiling decorated with rosettes. The main focus of the space is a staircase leading to the foyer of the main stock exchange hall. Large cloakrooms used to be situated on both sides of the vestibule.

The semicircular foyer in front of the stock exchange hall is roofed by a large glass vault. The north side of the foyer leads to the commodity exchange hall, which serves as a conference room today.

The main stock exchange hall is circular in shape, covered by a 21 meter wide coffered dome made of reinforced concrete and opened by a circular skylight. It is interesting to note that the dome's external layer is taller than the building's main façade. The floor of the main stock exchange hall is paved in mosaic, whereas glass prisms in the central part allow light to reach a smaller hall located on the ground floor. In addition to the main entrance from the foyer, the hall has two more entrances leading from both sides of the building and enabling a good connection with all rooms in the mezzanine. The hall's niches used to contain 52 telephone booths intended for traders. Today, the booths accommodate the vast collection of books from the library of the Croatian National Bank. The stock exchange hall is surrounded by a gallery, which is accessed from the hallway on the first floor.

Most of the rooms on the first floor retained the functions they had when the Stock Exchange used the building. The conference room in which the Council of the Croatian National Bank now holds its meetings was formerly the room of the Stock Exchange Council. Next to the hall, the Governor's and the Deputy Governor's

offices are situated in the former rooms of the Stock Exchange President and the Stock Exchange General Secretary.

The central hall on the second floor is the arbitration tribunal hall. The arbitration tribunal had an important role in the economic life of Zagreb in the 1920's. The hall is situated above the conference room on the first floor and is square in shape, roofed by a domed ceiling and a large skylight. The space next to the conference room is occupied by rooms, which were used by arbiters, parties, members of the Council and attorneys. The sign 'Law and Justice' used to be inscribed above the two fireplaces located in the room.

The Zagreb Stock and Commodity Exchange Building was inaugurated on 18 June 1927. To honour the occasion, *Svijet Illustrated Weekly* dedicated an entire issue to the event. Regrettably, the completion of construction works coincided with the deceleration of Croatian economic growth and a decrease in stock exchange transactions. Until World War II, the Zagreb Stock Exchange leased most of its premises. The Stock Exchange discontinued its work in 1945.

Today, the Croatian National Bank's building is one of the most recognisable Zagreb landmarks. ●



Today's Stock Exchange Hall; photo by Tvrtko Ujević.

- 1 The square changed the name five times in the course of history. It was called George Washington Square, Munich Victims Square, Joža Vlahović Square and twice The Stock Exchange Square. In 2001, it was renamed Trg hrvatskih velikana (Square of Croatian Greats). The most popular name by which the citizens of Zagreb usually refer to the square is the name dedicated to the institution constructed there, the Stock Exchange Square (Trg Burze), the name that was officially used from 1928 to 1941, and again from 1990 to 2001.
- 2 Mira Kolar-Dimitrijević, O osnutku i radu Zagrebačke burze do 1945. godine, Radovi Filozofskog fakulteta Sveučilišta u Zagrebu, No. 28, pp. 190-211, Zagreb.
- 3 HR-DAZG-248, Draft letter to Antun Goglia, royal and governor's counsellor, royal commissioner for the City of Zagreb, dated 18 February 1920. The letter is not recorded as sent in the Stock Exchange Registry book.
- 4 HR-DAZG-248, Zagreb Stock Exchange Annual Report 1922.
- 5 HR-DAZG-248, 42264.
- 6 HR-DAZG-248, 42585.
- 7 Stručnjak, Izložba palače Zagrebačke burze, 18 June 1921, Hrvatski. Anonymous article in the Hrvatski magazine signed by Expert.
- 8 HR-DAZG-248, 42585.
- 9 Expert Opinion on the Competition Entries, Zagreb, 1921, p. 22.
- 10 HR-DAZG 1, GPZ GO, 349, Competition designs for the Zagreb Stock Exchange.
- 11 HR-DAZG-248, 42264a, Viktor Kovačić's letter to the Stock Exchange.



Entrance Hall in front of the Stock Exchange Hall; photo by Božidar Bengez.

The Bank of Cyprus building within the medieval walls of Lefkosia

Christodoulos A. Hadjichristodoulou

It stands in the centre of the old city of Lefkosia, between Onasagorou¹ – Phaneromeni streets to the east, Lykourgou str. to the south and Socratous str. to the north. In the west it is adjacent to residences and shops facing the busy commercial Ledra street, known in the past as *Makrydromos*, namely the Long Street.

Initially the building had housed the Bank's banking outlet but also its administration offices². Today, the south part of the building includes the Customer service centre of the Bank (Fig. 1) whilst its northern part houses the Bank of Cyprus Cultural Foundation and the Bank of Cyprus Historical Archives³.

In 1933, specifically on 13 April, at a joint meeting between the Bank of Cyprus Board of Directors and the Supervisory Board, a decision was made to purchase the residence of Eleni Christodoulidou⁴ for £2.200 in order to house the Bank of Cyprus offices 'with all the buildings included within the court and four *sakorafía*⁵, but we may accept two *sakorafía* if need be, with the understanding that we will pay £40 less⁶.

At a joint meeting between the Board of Directors and the Supervisory Board on 12 May 1933, the committee of inquiry under Panayiotis M. Tseriotis, assigned to address various issues, proposed among other things that 'thoughts towards establishing a branch in Ammochostos must be postponed'⁷.



Fig. 1 The Customer service of the Bank . Photo: Bank of Cyprus Archives.



Fig. 2 The façade of the Bank's new building is shown on a photograph from 1940 . Photo: Bank of Cyprus Archives.

On 26 May of the same year, during the meeting of the Board of Directors, the Chairman presented 'drawings by architects Messrs Tsangarides and Demetriades. Both are of the opinion the Bank should be erected without demolishing the existing residence'. Various opinions were set forth at the board meeting; finally, a decision was reached that certified architects in Cyprus be asked to submit plans on a fee of £10 each for the best two, and that a request be forwarded to the Bank of Athens that it communicate the plans for its branches to the Board, for us 'to rely on and choose the most suitable one'⁸.

However, at a subsequent joint meeting held on 7 June between the Supervisory Board and the Board of Directors, it was decided that an architect be assigned to inspect the building and to decide on the expenditures required for it to meet the needs of the Bank.

The vote resulted in six votes for Tsangarides, four for Fotiades and three for Demetriades. The fee was set at £10 and as noted, 'Alongside Mr Tsangarides, Mr Y. Koursoumbas will also work, offering his services pro bono'.

The issue of the building would continue to trouble the two Boards until the end of 1933, as they found themselves unable to agree on whether it should be demolished and built anew or if the existing building should be repaired⁹. Finally, on 14 December, it was decided that the existing building be demolished and that a new two-storey building be erected on the site¹⁰.

1 Letter by Georgios Garanis, Bank of Cyprus Director, to Themistocles Dervis, Mayor of Lefkosia, 19 November 1951.

2 For more information see Y. Kypri, *The history of banks and financial institutions in Cyprus*, Lefkosia 2009, pp. 15-17 (Greek edition). Today, the management of the Bank is housed at the multi-storeyed building in the Ayia Paraskevi area of Nicosia.

3 The text makes use of original evidence and pictorial material from the Bank of Cyprus Historical Archives.

4 'Φωνή της Κύπρου', 21 October 1933 and 4 November 1933. Reference is made to the fact that the residence had been purchased from Ms Christodoulidou for the amount of £2,250.

5 The word *sakorafía* denotes a water measuring device.

6 Minutes from the joint meetings of the Board of Directors and the Supervisory Board, Special Committees, General Assemblies etc., 1913-1943, 27.

7 Ibid. 230.

8 Minutes of the Board of Directors of the Bank of Cyprus Ltd, 15.11.1932-5.3.1943, 26.

9 Minutes from the Joint Meetings of the Supervisory Board and the Board of Directors, 14 December 1933. 'Φωνή της Κύπρου', 4 November 1933. It is initially mentioned that a decision was taken by majority that the residence not be demolished, and that any repairs made should not exceed the amount of eight hundred pounds. Subsequently, however, it was decided that the residence should be demolished.

10 N. Pafitou, *The Bank of Cyprus. Chronicle 1899-2009*, Lefkosia 2010, 36. (Greek edition).

On 15 May 1934 a meeting took place to award the building contract. The competent Committee decided to award the project to Mr N. Hadjiconstantis, after securing an agreement for the most advantageous price. Construction works must have been well ahead by then, as the relocation to the Bank's new building was scheduled for October 1934¹¹.

The façade of the Bank's new building is shown on a photograph from 1940¹² (fig. 2). The building is designed in line with the architecture of the time, featuring stairs leading to the lobby and large windows providing ample light. On the ground floor, the windows have protective iron bars and, at the centre, the initials TK (Greek initials for 'Bank of Cyprus') as an emblem¹³. The upper area has large entrances, verandas and windows equipped with exterior shutters. The name 'Bank of Cyprus Ltd', in both Greek and English, is inscribed in capital letters on the free surfaces of the walls.

In 1951 the purchase of the building adjacent to the Central Building in Phaneromeni was made, with an eye to expanding the existing premises which had by then become too small for the execution of banking transactions and for the number of employees, who had surged from 17, when the building was first erected, to 85. The new building was envisaged as an imposing structure. It would include a banking transactions area with double the size of the existing hall and provide comfortable space for customers and staff. It had been decided that it would also house the Mortgage Bank of Cyprus¹⁴ and the Insurance Company¹⁵ and it would have central heating for the cold winter months¹⁶. In 1954, the Bank's management drew up plans for the creation of a Library and a large Reading Room for personnel¹⁷.

Above the central entrance on Onasagorou street, the name BANK OF CYPRUS was inscribed in big capital letters on a white marble plaque, together with the bank's



The central entrance of the Bank of Cyprus on Onasagorou street. Photo: Bank of Cyprus Archives.

relief emblem, namely an ancient coin from Pafos with the inscription 'KOINO KYPPIΩN'¹ (Common to all Cypriots) (fig. 3).

In 1969, the Bank's building underwent expansion. The task is assigned to the M. Michaelides Bros Technical Office, whilst Y.M. Michaelides and A.F. Modinos worked on the Lefkosia Insurances Building².

The ground floor, on the side of the Cultural Foundation, included the Periodical Exhibitions Hall (fig. 4), the Agora shop and the security booth, as well as the Museum of the History of Cypriot Coinage, on the left. The workshop of the Historical Archives was located to the west and the Historical Archives offices were located on the mezzanine floor. The Archives' façade is aptly decorated.

On the mezzanine floor, to the south, stands the Museum of the Collection of George and Nefeli Giabra Pierides (donated by Clio and Solon Triantafyllides), as well as the Hall of Educational Programmes, with areas for ancillary use and an office. The Hall hosts educational programmes, presentations and workshops.

On the first floor, above the museum, lie the management and personnel offices, the commanding Board Room, the Research Library, the 'Andreas Patsalides' Events Hall, the Photographic Archive and the area where the Collections of the Cultural Foundation are kept.

The second floor hosts the *Aerikon* restaurant, offering a unique view of the city of Lefkosia, since from there one can observe the old city with its significant medieval, post-Byzantine and modern monuments,



The periodical exhibitions hall of the Bank of Cyprus Cultural Foundation. Photo: Bank of Cyprus Archives.

whilst gazing at the villages on the northern range of Pentadaktylos (Turkish-occupied since 1974).

In the forecourt to the west of the Foundation lies the Theatre which presents or hosts various events. Sculptures by Cypriot artists are on display there.

The western part of the building, on the ground floor, houses a customer service shop, with various services housed in the upper storeys. The ground floor also hosts a permanent exhibition of the Historical Archives on the history of the Phaneromeni Building and an Office Equipment exhibition.

The masonry consists of local yellowish porous stone with selective use of marble revetment. The forms are plain and stately, with high ceilings, a distinctive element of the island's earlier architecture. The floors in the public areas are covered in multi-coloured marble slabs whilst the walls are decorated with works of art by Cypriot artists.

The ground floors are used by the Cultural Foundation, the Historical Archives and the Shop for storage or safekeeping of archives and other materials.

The historical building of the Bank of Cyprus in Phaneromeni stands apart as a point of reference for passers-by in the centre of the old city. On the streets around the Bank's building, the *Choraïtes*, namely the inhabitants of the *Chora* (Lefkosia), merchants and visitors, locals and foreigners, go about their business in an area graced by all sorts of shops, taverns and residences, old mansions, and of course the landmark church of Panagia Phaneromeni. ●

11 Minutes of the Board of Directors of the Bank of Cyprus Ltd, 15.11.1932-5.3.1943, 83.

12 Pafitou, op. cit. p. 41.

13 Ibid. p. 49. The Bank's emblem in iron bars was not used in the iron bars of the Bank of Cyprus building in Limassol, which opened in 1949.

14 Ibid. pp. 54, 58, 62.

15 Ibid. p. 52. The General Insurance of Cyprus (G.I.C.) commenced operations on 14 January 1952. There is, on the northern side of the building, on Socratous street, a relief emblem of the G.I.C. on marble, depicting Poseidon, god of the sea.

16 Ibid. p. 51.

17 Ibid. p. 54.

1 Reference to the emblem is made by the Chairman (1955-1963) of the Bank, Miltiades Koureas, see Pafitou, *Ibid.* p. 63.

2 These references are noted on the architectural plans for the expansion of the Phaneromeni building in 1969.

From the late sixties to the 21st century. The two central buildings of the Limassol Co-operative

Loucas Gregoriades

The two central buildings which have been constructed by the Limassol Co-operative Savings Bank in its seventy-year old history, constitute a significant part of modern and post-modern architectural history and development in Cyprus and in Limassol, in particular.

Their dynamic and impressionable presence in prominent parts of the city centre symbolize the rising and continuous progress of the organization as well as its increasing influence within the financial, social and cultural life of Limassol.

In the first difficult years of its operation, as from 1946 when it was established up to 1970 when it moved to the new, impressive, privately owned premises, the Limassol Co-operative Savings Bank has followed a long road, with continuous changes in the premises of its business. From the beginning of its operation up to and including 1957, it rented various buildings in the historical centre of Limassol.

After the mid-fifties, the increasing needs for more space, led the Committee and the Management of the organization to the decision to buy a building in 1957 in Ipirou Street near Heroes Square, in order to cover its needs.

Soon, these first privately-owned offices proved to be very small. The expansion of the cycle of business of the organization required the analogous space, which would serve its increased spatial and operational needs. So, towards the end of the sixties, it was decided to build a new, privately-owned central building in the town centre, near the Municipality. The vision of the management and the committee of Limassol Co-operative Savings Bank was the construction of an impressive building, which would symbolize the increased power and financial influence of the organization and its being sanctioned by the conscience of the Limassol public.



The old central premises after their completion in 1970 © Limassol Co-operative Savings Bank.

After research, it was decided to buy an old building in a central part of the historical centre of Limassol on the corner of Archbishop Kyprianos and G. Potamitis Streets, which was demolished. The choice of area was not accidental. There were many state and public services around the specific area, which in addition was surrounded by buildings – landmarks of Limassol town, such as the Municipality, the old central post office and the law courts.

The construction of a new central building was a very ambitious goal and this was achieved thanks to a loan being taken out internally by its members, who with great enthusiasm loaned the organization £ 70.000.

The design of the architectural plans was assigned to the architects Polydorides and Psyllides. Construction began in 1968 and finished two years later. In September 1970, the Limassol Co-operative Savings Bank officially moved to its new central building.

The impressive six-storey building is an exceptional example of architecture of the end of the sixties, representative of the aesthetics of its era. With its monumental character it dominates at the junction of Archbishop Kyprianos and G. Potamitis Streets, standing out with its solid cubic mass, resembling a huge vault, and also with its characteristic rectangular concrete cavities, now and then placed vertically and horizontally,

which function as sunscreens.

The intentions of the architects to emphasize the vertical element are obvious. The vertical lines, as they are outlined by the sunscreens and the plain concrete surfaces, surpass the horizontal ones.

The two main facades of the building, where each come to an end, towards Archbishop Kyprianos and G. Potamitis Streets, are riddled with openings to channel light whereas the sunscreens offer the necessary protection from the sun.

The new building covered fully the spatial needs of the Limassol Co-operative Savings Bank. Internally, the spaciousness together with its modern layout and office equipment offered a pleasant work environment for the employees of the company as well as an attractive area for carrying out banking business for its members and customers, whilst the general meetings of the Company could also take place in the new building.

Quite soon, however, the new central offices proved to be too small for the continuous increasing volume of business of the Limassol Co-operative Savings Bank and the consequent increase of the needs to have larger working areas. In addition the problem of accessibility and parking of vehicles in the town centre was continuously worsening, thereby obstructing the building being visited by the public. Having ascertained these problems, towards the end of the eighties, the management and the committee decided to construct new central premises. In 1988 the contract was awarded for a new building in Gladstone Street, on the outskirts of the historical centre of Limassol. The new building with architectural plans of the Architects A. Psyllides and G. Mavrommatis was inaugurated in 1992.

So, after 22 years, the cycle of life of the building in Archbishop Kyprianos Street came to an end as the central building of the Limassol Co-operative Savings Bank. After the new building was constructed, it continued operating as a branch of the organization in the historical centre of the town. After being fully renovated in 2011 with plans of the architect's office of G. Anastasiou, its operation was confined to the first two floors, whilst the other floors were rented out, inter alia, to the Cyprus University of Technology.

Today the old central building of the Limassol Co-operative Savings Bank has



The new central premises in Gladstone Street during the nineties before their renovation © Limassol Co-operative Savings Bank.

become a landmark itself in the area and, as a genuine banking structure of the sixties, constitutes a significant and integral part of the architectural history and development of not only Limassol but the whole of Cyprus.

The new central building, with its monumental character and prominent position, dominates Gladstone Street. With plans of the architect's office of G. Anastasiou, it was fully renovated in 2014 in order to meet the contemporary, spatial and functional needs, as well as the new aesthetical and environmental demands. After the completion of the renovation works it was classified on energy class B.

In comparison to the old central building, it is far lighter in character. The bulk of the building is comprised of different parts, shapes and sizes, making it easily visible for visitors coming from many different directions and visual angles. Built on a raised ten-step platform, it dominates its surrounding area in relation to other adjacent buildings.

Two towers, on its eastern and western edge, add a monumental character to the building. With their plain surfaces, interrupted only by the Bank's logo, they act as a strong contrast to the central part of the building which is distinguished by its glass surfaces.

The horizontal metallic sunscreens of the central section operate as a shield against the intense solar radiation, at the same time balancing the intense vertical element which is characteristic of the oblique towers. The visible staircase at the eastern tower with its glass cavity operates as a lantern at night emphasizing the character of the building as a landmark.

In the facades of the building, sections of which protrude, such as the porch at the entrance of the ground floor and the two towers, they interchange with others which retreat, like the central section and combined with their difference in height, they give movement to the image of the building. In addition, plain and open surfaces interchange harmoniously in the facades,

giving them an interesting contrast.

The materials and colours play their own role as regards the new aesthetics of the building. Glass, metal and wood and the colouring of the nickel, white and blue, supported by green, dominate the frontage, presenting vigorous but balanced contrasts.

As to the renovated building, special emphasis was given to natural lighting and ventilation in the internal areas, to soft lighting and the requirements of contemporary efficiency, spaciousness and the saving of energy.

With the construction of its two central buildings, the Limassol Co-operative Savings Bank has ornamented Limassol with two architectural works of monumental character, each one representing its own era, which constitute landmarks in the town centre and are remarkable examples of architectural bank buildings with enormous symbolic, historical and aesthetic value. ●



Old premises after renovation in 2011 © Limassol Co-operative Savings Bank.



The new central premises in Gladstone Street after their renovation in 2014 © Limassol Co-operative Savings Bank.

The Živnostenská Banka building

Jakub Kunert

The economic growth in the Czech lands in the second half of the 19th century influenced the urban development of Prague as the region's financial centre. The boom in financial intermediation was reflected in architecture as financial institutions decided to invest in the construction of new bank premises. Na Příkopě Street, one of the busiest streets in Prague, became the city's banking centre. Major local banks – Zemská banka království českého, Böhmische Escompte Bank, Úvěrní banka v Kolíně (Pražská úvěrní banka from 1900) and the most important of the Czech joint-stock commercial banks, Živnostenská banka pro Čechy a Moravu (Živnostenská banka from 1910) – established their headquarters there.

In the late 1890s, Živnostenská banka pro Čechy a Moravu, which opened in 1869 and had been using rented rooms in Na Příkopě Street and nearby Panská Street, was forced to seek more space for its rapidly expanding banking operations. For this purpose, in 1896 it bought two buildings in Na Příkopě Street near the crossroads by the Powder Tower¹ – ‘U tří kaprů’ (The Three Carps, No. 862) and ‘U železného muže’ (The Iron Man, No. 863). A public tender was declared for the design of the bank's headquarters in November 1896. A total of 29 architects registered for the tender, but the jury rejected all their proposals. After much deliberation it selected a project by the architect Osvald Polívka, who had designed the headquarters of Zemská banka království českého in the same street. Construction



Building of the Czech National Bank (former Živnostenská banka building) © CNB.

work started in 1897 and the building was completed three years later. The foremost Czech sculptors contributed to the decoration of the bank, built in the neo-Renaissance style with Art Nouveau elements.²

After Czechoslovakia was established in 1918 and Prague became the capital and financial centre of the new state, many banks started to consider building new head offices there. The new architecture was required not only to reflect the new economic situation, especially the development of banking business, but also to document the banks' economic strength. Many of the new projects, only a small proportion of which were completed, were located right in the financial heart of the country, Na Příkopě Street. As in other large Czechoslovak banks (such as Česká průmyslová banka, Pražská úvěrní banka, Böhmische Escompte Bank und Creditanstalt and Böhmische Bank Union), a debate about the construction of a new flagship

building had been going on in Živnostenská banka – a much more important bank than the other banks mentioned – since the mid-1920s.³ The new and considerably larger bank building would reflect the expansion of the bank's business and demonstrate its leading position in the Czechoslovak banking system. The bank acquired the adjacent Blue Star and Black Horse hotels for this purpose.

The bank's statutory bodies announced a narrower anonymous tender for the design of the new building in 1928. Ten leading Czechoslovak architects,⁴ representing the main Czechoslovak architects' associations and the architectural styles of the time (ranging from traditional historicism to moderate modernism),⁵ took part in the tender. All the projects were submitted by 31 January

1 The crossroads by the Powder Tower (formerly called the Kutná Hora Tower or Shabby Tower) had always been a busy trading place. The location grew in importance when King of Bohemia Wenceslas IV established his residence (the King's Court) there in the second half of the 14th century. The lavishly furnished palace was later turned into an archbishopric seminary (1631) and then a military academy (1777). The latter was replaced by the Art Nouveau Municipal House at the start of the 20th century. Workshops of craftsmen, especially blacksmiths, had been located on the site of Živnostenská banka since the Middle Ages. The Iron Man and Three Carps burgher houses and the Blue Star and Black Horse inns (later hotels) were later built on this site. The Blue Star Hotel entered world history on 23 August 1866 when the peace treaty between Austria and Prussia was signed there. For more details, see Eduard Bass, *Křižovatka u Prašné brány* [The Crossroads at the Powder Tower]. Prague 1947.

2 The sculptures on the original Živnostenská banka building were dominated by the statue Genius with a Lion by sculptor and medal-maker Antonín Popp. The sculpture later became the symbol of Živnostenská banka and, subsequently, the Czech National Bank. It comprises a figure of a striding genius in a fluttering robe holding aloft a flaming torch. At his side is a lion – a traditional Czech heraldic symbol and a symbol of Czech statehood – holding a ball under its front right paw. The sculpture was regarded as embodying the idea of progress.

3 See Ladislav Machoň, *Nové bankovní budovy v Praze* [New bank buildings in Prague], in *Hospodářský rozhled*, 12 July 1928, p. 3.

4 The following architects took part in the tender: Josef Kalous, Otakar Novotný, Osvald Polívka, Antonín Engel, Pavel Janák, Jan Zázvorka, Antonín Pfeiffer, František Roith, Josef Gočár and Bedřich Bendlmayer. The Archive of the Czech National Bank (hereinafter ACNB), archival holding Živnostenská banka (hereinafter ŽB), ŽB/515/1, *Novostavba bankovní budovy, Zpráva pro ředitelství Jana Dvořáčka 'Stavba bankovní budovy'* [The new bank building, Report for the Board of Directors by Jan Dvořáček 'Construction of the Bank Building'], 1 February 1929, box no. 515.

5 See *ibid.*, *Zpráva pro ředitelství Jana Dvořáčka 'Bankovní novostavba'* [Report for the Board of Directors by Jan Dvořáček, 'The new bank building'], 27 September 1928, box no. 515.

1929⁶ and were then assessed by a special jury consisting of prominent architects, art experts and the bank's managers.⁷ The jury started by deciding that it would be a mistake to preserve the bank's original building. It then assessed the proposals and divided them into three categories according to their feasibility: A ('highest-quality'), B ('less suitable for banking purposes') and C ('unsuitable'). It eventually selected three category A proposals that it deemed to be the best in terms of architectural and space planning value.⁸ However, none of them was considered 'fully satisfactory' or suitable for implementation without reservations.⁹

The building was eventually built according to the design by František Roith. His project was described by the jury as the most valuable in terms of space planning. Roith's dull façade, however, was to be modified in collaboration with the architect Bedřich Bendlmayer, whose façade design was 'generally liked'.¹⁰ However, the six-month collaboration between the two architects ended in a controversy. The project preparations fell behind schedule, and the delay was increased further by disputes with the municipality, which refused to approve the demolition of the façade of the former bank building designed

by Osvald Polívka.¹¹

The start of the Great Depression became a convenient excuse for the bank's management to discontinue the preparatory work, even though the city council had ceded to almost all of Živnostenská banka's demands in the interests of reducing unemployment.¹² It was not until the start of 1935 that the bank decided to launch construction. However, the original project was substantially altered, as the plan to sell the Black Horse Hotel, which was to serve as the bank's temporary building during the construction phase, was abandoned. A new building containing offices to be rented to companies from the bank's group was to be erected in its place. A passage connecting Na Příkopě Street with Havlíčkovy (now Senovážné) Square was also incorporated into the architectural solution.¹³

The first phase of the project started with the demolition of the Blue Star Hotel in mid-1935. Work on this part of the building ended in 1939. The old building and the former Black Horse Hotel were torn down in the second and third phases. The new building was completed on 14 May 1942, with construction costs slightly exceeding 100 million crowns. František Roith's winning design strongly accentuated the general opinion that a bank building should symbolise stability. The building was designed in the functionalist style of Czech individualistic modernism as a practical bank building capable of meeting all the needs of a modern financial institution. Thanks to the wealth of its investor, it was one of the most comfortable and luxurious bank buildings of its day. Moreover, Živnostenská banka was able to award all the contracts for construction work and modern interior design to companies from its concern at favourable prices. The only statue to be moved from the original building to the new one was Antonín Popp's

6 The ten architects submitted ten projects, one of them (The Red Point) being later supplemented by a more detailed version. Eleven proposals were therefore sometimes mentioned later in connection with the tender.

7 For the tender conditions and jury composition see AČNB, ŽB/4410/2, Potvrzení příjmu všeobecných podmínek užší soutěže novostavby, Všeobecné podmínky užší soutěže na novostavbu budovy Živnostenské banky v Praze [Confirmation of accepting the general conditions of the narrower tender for the construction of a new bank building, General conditions of the narrower tender for the new Živnostenská banka building in Prague], 11 October 1928, box no. 4410.

8 The ranking of the three proposals was as follows: 1) Evropa (Europe), 2) Oblouk (The Arch), 3) Červený bod (The Red Point) according to the architectural criterion, and 1) Červený bod, 2) Oblouk, 3) Evropa according to the space planning criterion. The designers were: Červený bod – František Roith, Oblouk – Josef Gočár, Evropa – Jan Zázvorka. AČNB, ŽB/4410/3, Protokoly o schůzích jury, Protokol o schůzi poroty na novostavbu Živnostenské banky [Minutes of the meetings of the jury, Minutes of the meeting of the jury on the tender for the new Živnostenská banka building], 15 March 1929, box no. 4410.

9 Ibid., Zpráva pro schůzi představenstva [Report for the Board of Directors meeting], 29 March 1929, Posudky projektů [Project assessment reports], box no. 4410. Although the jury did not select a winning project, the wider architectural community clearly preferred 'the hawkish claw of a generous design' of Josef Gočár to the 'flawless design lacking a leading idea' of František Roith. See, for example, AČNB, ŽB/646/5, Novinářské zprávy, Soutěž Živnobanky [Newspaper reports, The Živnobanka tender], in LN, 27 March 1929, and J. R. Marek, Soutěž na novostavbu Živnostenské banky [The tender for the new Živnostenská banka building], in LN, 27 March 1929, box no. 645.

10 AČNB, ŽB/4410/3, Protokoly o schůzích jury, Zpráva pro schůzi představenstva [Minutes of the meetings of the jury, Report for the Board of Directors meeting], 29 March 1929, Posudky projektů [Project assessment reports], box no. 4410.

11 AČNB, ŽB/515/1, Novostavba bankovní budova, Ředitelské zprávy, Zpráva pro ředitelství Hugo Felfela 'Novostavba naší bankovní budovy' [The new bank building, Board of directors reports, Report for the board of directors by Hugo Felfel 'Our new bank building'], 17 January 1930, box no. 515.

12 See, for example, ibid., Zpráva pro ředitelství Josefa Nepraše 'Novostavba' [Report for the Board of Directors by Josef Nepraš 'The new building'], 16 May 1931, box no. 515.

13 Ibid., Schůze výkonného výboru [Executive committee meeting], 26 March 1935, box no. 515. It is worth noting that the proposal to build the passage and extend the project to include the Black Horse Hotel was initially rejected by Živnostenská banka, which felt it would compromise the bank's security. This solution had featured in a Živnostenská banka project drawn up by Pavel Janák in 1929. AČNB, ŽB/4410/3, Protokoly o schůzích jury, Zpráva pro schůzi představenstva [Minutes of the meetings of the jury, Report for the Board of Directors meeting], 29 March 1929, Posudky projektů [Project assessment reports], box no. 4410.



Staircase in the new Živnostenská banka building © CNB.



Old buildings of the Živnostenská banka, Blue Star and Black Horse hotels © CNB.



Ground plan of the new Živnostenská banka building © CNB.

Genius with a Lion. All the rest were moved to the Lapidarium of the National Museum.

The building became the headquarters of the State Bank of Czechoslovakia in 1950 and of the Czech National Bank in 1993 following the split of the Czech and Slovak Federative Republic. The Czech National Bank also bought the adjacent Commodity Exchange, built in the historicist style in the 1890s, and its 1920s Art Deco extension.¹⁴ At the turn of the millennium these buildings underwent extensive reconstruction into state-of-the-art central bank premises. ●

14 Živnostenská banka had bought the adjacent Commodity Exchange building in the late 1940s after its banking operations had expanded due to the concentration of Czechoslovak banks. Following the Communist takeover in February 1948, the authorities allocated the complex of buildings to the newly established Czechoslovak Television in the late 1950s.

Bank of Finland head office

Vappu Ikonen

The Bank of Finland was established in 1811, which makes it the fourth oldest central bank in the world. The Bank of Finland started to operate in Turku in the western part of Finland in April 1812. A few years later the bank moved to Helsinki, where it operated from several addresses including the handsome Senate Building at Senate Square, designed by C. L. Engel. The bank moved to its south wing in 1824.

A decision to build a head office to the Bank was taken after the bank had transferred from the authority of the Senate to the Diet (lower house of Parliament) in 1868. A few years later a plot was purchased in the central district of Kruununhaka.

Finland's first international architectural competition was organised in 1878 for the design of the building. It was won by a German, Ludwig Bohnstedt (1822-1885).

Architect Ludwig Bohnstedt

Ludwig Bohnstedt was born in 1822 in St. Petersburg. He moved to Berlin in 1839 and first started to study philosophy and later architecture at the Berlin Bauschule. He also studied landscape painting and moved to Italy for a year to study the history of architecture.

Bohnstedt began working as a private architect in St. Petersburg with only 21 years of age. He was subsequently awarded the title of professor of the St. Petersburg Academy of Art in 1858, although he never taught there.

Since the end of the 1850s Bohnstedt's typical projects consisted of small townhouses of stone for the aristocracy or commercial bourgeois. At that time, the most significant work was represented by Yusupov's Beaux Arts townhouse, which was built between 1852-1858 in Litenij.

In 1863, Bohnstedt moved to his homeland in Germany and there designed a series of bank buildings. According to professor Helander, Bohnstedt moved freely between



*Bank of Finland in 1890's. Board of Antiquities.
© Axel Lindahl.*

different historical genres such as antique, Roman and sundry, gothic and renaissance. Bohnstedt's neo-renaissance projects were characterized by strong, closed houses, isolated from the surrounding buildings.

The head office of the Bank of Finland

The first architectural competition held in Finland was an international competition for designing the head office of the Bank of Finland in 1876. The competition prospectus laid down several requirements for the building. The main facade should face Nikolainkatu (nowadays Snellman Square). The building material should be fire safe, which meant that only stone and iron were allowed as building materials, except for the floors and doors. Heating had to be conveyed to the bank building from a separate annex. The room layout was also strictly specified.

The first prize was awarded to architect Ludwig Bohnstedt. His neo-renaissance styled proposal for the Bank of Finland head office included features similar to a bank which he had recently completed in Germany. For example, the two-storey buildings had a clear, almost cubic form, rustic wings and Roman arches. All these solutions are typical of the era.

The facades are representative. Indoors



*Office in the Bank of Finland in 1930's.
© Museum of Helsinki photo archive.*

attention focuses on a series of handsome spaces, which lead to the ground floor foyer. The spatial compositions - such as many other public buildings built in the 1800s - are characterized by the dominant monumental staircase and continue to the main floor halls. The ceiling and the walls exhibit a rich, classic design that was typical of the times but fairly new in Finland.

The building also provides technical novelty such as the steel used in its construction. The objective was essentially fire safety.

Construction of the headquarters began in the late 1870s. The cornerstone of the building was laid in May 1879, a year after the Finnish markka had been fixed to the gold standard. As Antti Kuusterä and Juha Tarkka have pointed out, the building can be seen as a monument to Finland's new, European monetary system, reiterated by the cementing of 10 and 20 markka gold coins in the foundation of the building.

Ludwig Bohnstedt never visited Finland and never saw the building he had designed. A Finnish architect F.A. Sjöström was hired to supervise execution. He criticised Bohnstedt's design, pointing out, for example, that the height of a room could vary in different drawings.

The structures and in-house technical



*The Snellman hall after restoration in 2006.
Bank of Finland archive © Peter Mickelsson.*



*Bank of Finland head office in summer.
Bank of Finland archive © Peter Mickelsson.*



Snellman Square. On the left, the Financial Supervision main building and the Cathedral; in the middle, the Bank of Finland and its annexes; on the right, the National archive and below right, the House of Estates. © Bank of Finland archive.

amenities were carried out by domestic architectural/engineering firms. A senior engineer named Ossian Bergbom oversaw construction and the engineer Gustaf Emil Berggren dealt with the technical facilities of the building.

The main building was completed in 1883. The final cost of construction had increased by approximately 1.1 million FIM.

The later renovations of the head office

In the 1890's, Gustaf Nyström became the regular architect of the Bank of Finland. He designed several branch offices for the Bank of Finland. He had also a considerable impact on the architecture of the head office. The small courtyards of the building were closed off and the underground floor was provided with a new vault. Covering the main area for serving members of the public, a glass roof was constructed.

The head office was damaged by bombing in 1944. The distinguishing glass roof was destroyed in the bombings and was replaced with a solid roof.

In the early 1960's, the building was completely renovated and a large extension was constructed on the west side by architect Harry W. Schreck. The interior of the head office was turned into a large, functional public office building.

During the latest restoration, completed in 2006, part of Bohnstedt's and Nyström's designs were re-established in the main layout of the old part of the building.

Even after all the changes to the head

office, one can still experience the architectural designs of Ludwig Bohnstedt. In the interior, the grand entrance hall and its wall placement, typical of Bohnstedt, can still be experienced.

Surroundings of the Bank of Finland head office

Today, the Bank of Finland operates from three sites, only a couple of blocks from each other: Snellman Square (the old head-quarters), Rauhankatu 16 (Harry Schreck's expansion) and Rauhankatu 19, which served as an old printing works and was converted into an office building.

At Snellman square, the Bank of Finland's head office environment is composed of the House of the Estates (1891), the National Archives (1896) and the Financial Supervisory Authority's headquarters. Both the House of the Estates and the National Archives are designed by architect Gustaf Nyström. The location of the House of the Estates opposite to the Bank emphasized the Bank of Finland's status as the bank of the estates.

The Financial Supervisory Authority's headquarters is located at Snellmaninkatu 4-6. The building was designed by architect EB Lohrmann. It was built in 1857.

In the centre of the square stands the statue of the statesman, J.V. Snellman, designed by sculptor Emil Wikström in 1923. Wikström also designed the House of the Estates' wall relief that emphasizes the

relationship between the Emperor and the people and the importance of compliance with the law.

The erection of the J.V. Snellman statue took place after a long national cultural debate. Erected in 1923 the statue ensured that Snellman Square became the young, newly independent nation's major public forum. ●

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The three lives of Hôtel Gaillard

Régine Casassa and Philippe Bonzom

This historical landmark was originally built in 1882 by private banker Emile Gaillard to host his extraordinary collection of medieval and Renaissance artwork. In 1919, the building was bought by the Banque de France to become one of its branches in Paris. In 2006, the Banque de France closed that branch and soon launched the project of transforming it into Citéco, the Cité de l'économie et de la monnaie (City of economics and money), the first museum in France dedicated to economics.

The architectural complex, which is in the neo-Gothic, art déco and "eclectic" styles, is unique in Paris. It was classified as "Historic Monument" in 1999. Architects Victor-Jules Février (1842-1937) and Alphonse Defrasse (1860-1939) were responsible for its construction, the first for Émile Gaillard, the second for the Banque de France.

Émile Gaillard chose to build his private mansion in the middle of the Plaine Monceau, urbanised in the second half of the nineteenth century. Quite appropriately, given his client's artistic tastes, Victor-Jules Février was inspired by the architecture of the Loire Valley Châteaux, particularly by the Louis XIII wing of the Château of Blois and the Château of Gien. Emblematic of this style are the fixing of the staircases, the high roofs, the Gothic gable windows and the brick facing (photo 1). The building was formally inaugurated in 1885, at a costume ball attended by nearly two thousand guests, with Émile Gaillard dressed as Henri II (photo 2). Old photographs and the catalogue detailing the sale of Émile Gaillard's artworks (in 1904) illustrate the richness of the interiors and the works displayed in the mansion (photo 3). A great collector, Émile Gaillard brought back from his travels in France and Europe not only works of art and furniture but also fireplaces and wood panels that he incorporated into the decor and ornamentation of the ceremonial rooms. Preserved elements of Hôtel Gaillard show the freedom with which genuine features and copies



Photo 1: Hôtel Gaillard : The main façade in 1904 .© Collection Banque de France.

were combined at this time. The presence in the building of several sculpture portraits of Émile Gaillard and his architect testify to their complicity and sense of humour.

After the financier's death in 1902, most of his collection was sold. Hôtel Gaillard was put on sale in 1904, but it was only in 1919 that it was bought by the Banque de France and converted into one of its branches by architect Alphonse Defrasse and interior decorator Jean-Henri Jansen. The new branch opened in 1923. The extensions carried out by the Banque de France consisted in constructing, in the inner courtyard of Émile Gaillard's mansion, a large hall for the Banque de France's customers and a highly secure safe room. While introducing the "Banque de France style" into the additions he made to the building, Alphonse Defrasse echoed the work of Février, notably in the treatment of the inner wall of the customers' hall and in the decor of the woodwork of the counter, known as "serviettes". The safe room is on two levels. It is protected by a moat, which to this day is filled with water,

and is accessed by a rolling bridge, making this secret place one of the most unusual in Paris (photo 4).

The branch's activities ceased in 2006, when France's central bank re-organized and streamlined its branch network in the country. It was soon decided that Hôtel Gaillard will be the home of Citéco, the Cité de l'Économie et de la Monnaie, a new museum dedicated to economic literacy in France. It will house educational, interactive and entertaining presentations on the economy, money and the links between money, finance and the economy. It will also display the Banque de France's rich collection of banknotes and coins as well as currency printing machines.

This third life of Hotel Gaillard will begin in 2018, the date scheduled for the opening of the new museum. At that time, in addition to educational tours about economics, Citéco will also propose visitors guided tours focusing on the architecture and history of this singular building, which will thus be accessible to the general public for the first time (photo 5).



Photo 2 : The Gaillard family in Renaissance attire in 1885. © Collection Banque de France.



Photo 3 : Hôtel Gaillard – Dining room in 1904. © Collection Banque de France.



Photo 4 : Hôtel Gaillard : Cross sectional view of the safe room and moat. © Collection Banque de France.



Photo 5 : Main entrance of the future Cité de l'économie, Virtual view . © Ateliers Lion & Banque de France.

However, the Cité de l'économie et de la monnaie already offers a wide range of educational and cultural services that give the public the opportunity of exploring economics in various manners – temporary exhibitions, conferences and debates, events, digital productions on the internet, social media –. It thus provides the general public, particularly youngsters, with insights and a pedagogical perspective on the questions raised in the news. More details on Citéco's activities and educational tools may be found on the Cité's website : www.citeco.fr.

It is noteworthy, especially from an *ebah* point of view, that Citéco emphasizes history as a way to better understand economics. Among its already published educational tools, the interactive timeline „10,000

years of economy“¹ presents 200 milestones in economic history in a global, multidisciplinary and highly illustrated fashion. In 2015, the most recent version of this timeline was selected as Website of the Day by the CSS Design Awards, a panel of international judges who reward sites for creativity, functionality and usability. The webdoc „Images of crises“² allows viewers to „relive“ five major economic and financial crises from 1923 onwards, using audiovisual archives. Finally, Citéco recently published the interactive multimedia tool „History of Economic Thought“³ which focuses on the lives and work of 55 authors who, since Aristotle,

have had a major influence on economics.

As far as architectural history is concerned, Citéco's website already features several articles on Emile Gaillard, the 1885 costume ball, architects Victor-Jules Févier and Alphonse Defrasse, the neo-gothic style, and last but not least, the team in charge of transforming the Hôtel for its third life : architect Yves Lion and museographer François Confino. The website also offers an online virtual tour⁴ of the Hôtel before transformation. ●

1 <http://www.citeco.fr/10000-years-of-economy-New-version>.

2 <http://www.citeco.fr/Images-of-crises>.

3 <http://www.citeco.fr/>

The-history-of-economic-thought-in-an-interactive-multimedia.

4 http://www.citeco.fr/visite-virtuelle/Facade_sRVB.html.

The BNP Paribas Mile

An overview of BNP Paribas landmarks in Paris's historic financial quarter

Christiane de Fleurieu

The French financial Group BNP Paribas was created in 2000 through a merger of BNP and Paribas. BNP Paribas and its predecessor banks trace their roots back almost 200 years, with a rich history of both innovative client-centric developments and responsible community commitments. As the 21st century started, the successive mergers or acquisitions consolidated a unique portfolio of eight office buildings located in the historic financial quarter of Paris, straddling mainly the 2nd arrondissement and the southern fringe of the neighboring 9th arrondissement. They line more or so the western stretch of the famous Grands Boulevards, from Boulevard Poissonnière to Boulevard des Capucines, with BNP's 14 rue Bergère and Paribas's 37 place du Marché Saint-Honoré delineating the utmost ends. Eastward of the Place de l'Opéra junction are the BNP buildings and westward are those of Paribas. Sandwiched in between is the Palais du Hanovre, an addition in 2006 made by BNP Paribas. These eight outstanding edifices represent the layers of both Paris's and BNP Paribas's history, closely interwoven with the social and financial emergence of the prominent area.

Crown financiers' quarter

The birth of the quarter dates back to the beginning of the 18th century when the old northern rampart was dismantled to provide the landscape of the Nouveau-Cours, a fashionable tree-lined promenade. The new urban area, a far cry from the left bank medieval Paris with its narrow and short winding streets, offered the wide open space the new set of Crown financiers were looking for so that they could erect mansions with huge gardens. This took place in the aftermath of property

speculations in which landowners benefitted greatly. Moreover, in 1719, John Law hosted the Royal Bank in the Hôtel de Nevers, at the corner of Rue de Richelieu and Rue Colbert. When it was liquidated shortly thereafter, the building was used by stockbrokers for the next sixty years, before becoming the Royal Library and nowadays the National Library.

Financial institutions under the Empire

After the French Revolution, the early years of the 19th century saw the Banque de France, the Central Bank of France, and the Bourse or Stock Exchange, being established in the area under the patronage of Emperor Napoleon I. Furthermore, some of the hôtels particuliers were sold to European merchant bankers, like Perregaux, Lafitte or Rothschild, so as to house their newly-launched Parisian banking businesses. At the same time, Paris was equipped with an Opera House, which remained in the precinct despite three successive relocations, thus initiating the entertainment and leisure tradition of the Grands Boulevards.

General banking forging ahead

In the aftermath of the 1848 upheavals, the French Second Republic decreed the foundation of deposit and lending banks in order to remedy the credit freeze. Subsequently, ordinary people gained access to general banking : as their dormant savings were recycled into the economy, securities were listed on the Stock Exchange. As banks began working face-to-face with their customers, they needed large premises with vast public hallways and secured vaults, conveniently near to the Central Bank and Stock Exchange buildings. Haussmann's urban works were the final stage in the development of the financial district.

Mesmerizing landmark portfolio

BNP Paribas national-calibre forerunners had settled their headquarters in the historic financial quarter. With the parent company changing its name seven times during the 20th century, they added to, rather than replaced, their earlier headquarters. The urban structure abled sprawls over their block and even extensions over adjacent streets. Moreover, they kept on enlarging the building for their central services, seizing opportunities when needed. Because banks compete for clients, they have always recognized the architectural image value to both retain and attract customers. Hence these headquarters were widely publicized at some critical moments such as WWI aftermath (14 Rue Bergère), acquisition (16 Boulevards des Italiens), or privatization (3 Rue d'Antin). Built on striking locations by famed architects using the latest techniques, they were also seen as a highly distinctive architectural expression that could show off the modernity of the bank. Nowadays they have shifted to focus on social awareness and environmental responsibility to rekindle the flame of the general public. The new age of the old bank buildings is marked by sustainable initiatives and socializing with local communities. This contributes towards staff well-being and towards reducing the bank's ecological footprint. Moreover, it allows for, open day events, history sharings and communications.

To paraphrase the famed crooner Yves Montand: let's stroll round the Grands Boulevards, there are so many things to see... Within a mile, BNP Paribas today still occupies eight landmarks even though numerous other banks' buildings underwent office conversion or creative adaptive re-use, ie a former bank turned into an Apple Store.



14 rue BergèreThe CNEP headquarters. The main entrance façade establishes the image of the bank as a temple of finance. It boasts impressive statues by Aimé Millet and exquisite mosaics by Giandomenico Facchina. BNP Paribas Historical Archives © Vincent Fillon.

14 Rue Bergère

The CNEP rented the premises for eleven years until its purchase in 1862. As both operations and staff numbers increased swiftly, and to keep central services and general management headquartered under one roof, the CNEP hired French architect Edouard-Jules Corroyer to remodel the space into a neoclassical structure. Its façade established the image of the bank as a temple of finance. From 1878 to 1882, some of the best-known craftsmen and artists of the time worked on the superb decorative stoneworks and notable ornamentations: mosaicist Giandomenico Facchina, sculptor Aimé Millet, painter Charles Lameire. The huge public hall boasts Toscan columns and a polychrome glass ceiling. The great flying staircase is overtly Byzantine in inspiration and overlooks the directors' offices. But to attract customers, the architectural decor evokes wealth and integrity, endurance and confidence, qualities which are deeply rooted in the bank. For example, exquisite mosaics showcase the five continents where the pioneering CNEP had opened branches.

Furthermore cutting-edge innovation was to be found in every corner such as the



1 boulevard Haussmann / 16 boulevard des Italiens / 20 boulevard des Italiens BNP headquarters frontage by night. This stunning picture was used for the Annual Report of Year 1989. © BNP Paribas Heritage & Archives.

provision of electricity, the elevator, central heating and the internal pneumatic tube mail network. The expansive public hall, designed according to mass appeal, flaunted unusual amenities such as a weather station and clocks showing current local times in a selection of major cities around the world. Its ingenious glass slab floor increased the natural lighting to the vaults below.

Between 2007 and 2009, the 1991-listed building underwent a thorough renovation while necessary adaptations for today's banking activities were smoothly embedded into the architecture while reducing the ecological footprint. As a result, it is the first ever listed building to be awarded the HQE certification. Nowadays, it houses the Investment Partners subsidiary.

1 Boulevard Haussmann

This neoclassical triangular shape was designed by Parisian architects Julien & Dubayon and built between 1925 and 1927. It filled the wedged-shaped block located at the intersection of the fashionable Boulevard des Italiens and the newly-opened section of the Boulevard

Haussmann, bordering the Rue Le Peletier. The construction corresponded with the launch of the last stretch of the Boulevard Haussmann after works for the first one began eighty years ago. Where old houses dating back to the 1840s and the lively Passage de l'Opéra used to be, monumental hotels and financial head offices were erected. But against all expectations this prestigious lot was owned by a real estate investor, who ordered the construction of a rental edifice with shops and office spaces. Not long thereafter, its neighbour, the Banque Nationale de Crédit (BNC), a forerunner of the BNP, had outgrown its own new premises and started to rent offices. In the 1950s, the building was considered an extension of its headquarters when its successor, the Banque Nationale pour le Commerce et l'Industrie (BNCI), implemented a foreign exchange office on the ground floor. Hence renovation works were undertaken to make the lower part of the façade look alike the 16 Boulevard des Italiens by undertaking the same wrought-iron workmanship as in the 1930s. A covered footbridge links the two buildings. Today, this building houses retail and corporate banking units.

16 Boulevard Des Italiens

The Boulevard des Italiens was one of the most bustling thoroughfares in the days of the Second Empire thanks to its cafés and the old opera house nearby. One of these cafés, the famous Café Riche, was established at 16 Boulevard des Italiens. But soon thereafter, in 1875, bad fortune was to befall it with the opening of a new opera house further away. Furthermore, as a place in which to do business Paris was finding increasing favor in the eyes of large international corporations, which wanted to establish showy head offices and branches. Thus, The New York Life Insurance Company bought the building but under the condition to keep Café Riche in the ground floor of the new monumental building. It was built in 1898.

In 1917, the newly-founded BNC moved in after it had outgrown its original headquarters at 20 rue Le Peletier. Then the bank started to buy the houses contained in the block bordered by the Boulevard des Italiens, Rue Laffitte, Rue Le Peletier and the new stretch of the future Boulevard Haussmann. The Parisian architects Marrast and Letrosne were in charge of drafting the blueprints for the new and modern head office encompassing the New York Life building. Monumental sculptures were removed while the newly acquired old houses were demolished. The works, lasting from 1926 to 1932, generated many arguments such as the height of the neo-Egyptian and Art Deco building. But there it is, in the manner of the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées and the Palais du Trocadéro. The construction featured vanguard office layouts and outstanding vaults with safe rooms much appreciated by neighbouring auctioneers and gallerists. The front doors and ground level windows sport magnificent wrought-iron railings designed by Raymond Subes.

Today and according to its direct fore-runner tradition, BNP Paribas is headquartered at 16 Boulevard des Italiens. Following in the footsteps of the 14 Rue Bergère, the whole building will be completely rejuvenated in the next few years to come.

20 Boulevard Des Italiens

The Maison Dorée stands at 20 Boulevard des Italiens. Its history began with the construction of a townhouse for Army treasurer, Bouret. Later it became home to the Duke of Choiseul-Stainville and there the famous

Madame Tallien lived and launched the fashion of the Greek flimsy gowns worn by the eccentric Merveilleuses at the end of the 18th century during the Directoire era.

The first years of the 19th century saw the most expensive restaurant of Paris, Café Hardy, move into the premises. But in 1836, the Hamel brothers, the owners of the Grand Véfour at the Palais Royal, bought the block and asked the architect Léopold Kauffmann to design a trendy restaurant. Hence the nickname, Golden House, was bestowed on the neo-renaissance building adorned with exquisite sculptures and balconies. There, the Parisian smart set mingled with politicians, wealthy entrepreneurs, artists and novelists such as Balzac, Proust and Zola. The impressionists immortalized the scenic neighbourhood; like Manet with his painting named Tortoni. The chef Casimir Moisson created the renowned dish Tournedos Rossini for the composer Gioachino Rossini, a regular.

The BNP bought the building in 1970 to extend its nearby headquarters. The history of this block added pressure to the task of the bank's architect, Pierre Dufau, who finally integrated an entirely new interior into the historic façade. It currently houses parts of the Group's Corporate and Institutional Banking activities.

16 Rue De Hanovre

BNP Paribas acquired the building complex, dubbed Palais du Hanovre, with its offices, shops and cinemas in 2006 to reunite scattered central services. Architects Charles Lemaresquier and Victor Laloux erected the Art deco building on the site of an imposing mansion's garden landscaped for Crown financier Lacour-Deschiens. It overlooks Boulevard des Italiens as did the exquisite Pavillon de Hanovre, built in 1758, by French architect Jean-Michel Chevotet and commissioned by the Duke of Richelieu, a later owner. The splendid structure with its rotunda was conducive to memorable functions and festive gatherings. It was also the seat of first ever events when American-born Callender installed its Pansteorama, thus establishing a cinema tradition in the neighbourhood; Italian caterers Velloni & Tortoni hosted tea-tastings which were new to Paris; and French silversmith Christofle opened its show-room to showcase innovative modern design and electroplated manufacturing.



2 place de l'Opéra. As it faces the Opera House and stands at the corner of the bustling Avenue de l'Opéra and Rue du Quatre-Septembre, rotunda façade. © BNP Paribas Historical Archives.

Dismantled stone by stone in 1931 to make space for the office block, the garden pavilion was re-assembled in the park of the Château de Sceaux where it stands presently. Nowadays, the building houses the units of the Group Communications division as well as subsidiaries and parts of the Corporate and Institutional Banking activities.

2 Place De L'Opéra

Facing the new Opéra House, the distinctive building was designed by Paris architect Henri Blondel and built between 1868 and 1873. It was intended to serve as headquarters for the Société de Dépôts et de Comptes Courants, a bank founded in 1863 to bring in new retail banking methods from England. After the bank was liquidated in 1892, the CNEP took over the lease. The property became the Parisian flagship the bank was longing for and turned it into its main branch.

This very location conducted the rotunda façade to take part in national events the financial institutions had to cope with. During the two world wars of the 20th century, the building survived while its corner front played a historic role, displaying a large canvas bearing in 1918 the exquisite Leroux war loan poster Alsace Lorraine business being as usual, and from 1940 to 1944 the inscription Kommandant der Stadt Paris the premises being requisitioned by the occupying forces. Then, on 27 November 2015, two weeks after the Paris attacks, while a national tribute took place in Les Invalides, the French flag was digitally



3 rue d'Antin. Since 1869, BNP Paribas and its predecessor banks have carefully preserved the historic room where Napoléon Bonaparte wedded Joséphine on 9 March 1796. The magnificent boiseries by Nicolas Pineau and paintings by Sébastien Il Le Clerc retain the unique atmosphere of the 18th century Hôtel de Mondragon. BNP Paribas Historical Archives © Vincent Fillon.



37 place du Marché Saint-Honoré. The 3 rue d'Antin operational headquarters stand at the far end of the Passage des Jacobins. BNP Paribas Historical Archives © Vincent Fillon.

displayed on both widescreen sides of the main entrance to pay homage to victims.

The circular public hall boasting a new translucent concrete glass roof was used to reflect the bank's modernism in a famous two-page advertisement in the Paris Match magazine in the 1960s. In 2010, BNP Paribas refurbished this branch into an outstanding retail banking model called Concept Store. This innovation laboratory offers clients a new approach to banking relationships and enhances the use of the newest technologies.

3 Rue D'Antin

The hôtel particulier was erected between 1720 and 1722 for Etienne Bourgeois de Boynes, the treasurer of the Royal Bank founded by John Law. Then the property passed on to several owners, the latter being the Marquis de Mondragon, until it was seized as national property by the French Revolution. After being turned into the town hall for the 2nd arrondissement, Napoléon Bonaparte wedded Joséphine de Beauharnais on 9 March 1796 in one of its splendid rooms decorated with boiseries by Nicolas Pineau and paintings by Sébastien Il Le Clerc.

In 1869, the premises were acquired by the Banque de Paris from the Mondragon family and became the headquarters of the Banque de Paris et des Pays-Bas in 1872, and subsequently the operational headquarters of BNP Paribas in 2000.

Over the years, the banks, while respectful of the historic decors listed in 1926, had to enlarge the office areas. As early as 1880s, the courtyard was glass roofed and equipped with heavy mahogany counters to be used by the securities department, and the stables were turned into offices. During the 20th century, the 3 rue d'Antin encompassed the other houses of the block and was enlarged across adjacent streets. In the 1950s, a new central hall, called L'Orangerie, was designed on the first floor level by Jansen House. Lined with orange-trees in wooden boxes to revive the original courtyard, it leads to the general management's offices, the boardroom and the function rooms.

Determined to adapt the buildings to the bank's needs, the different historical town houses were joined together while digital facilities were carefully included as well as facilities dedicated to staff well-being and creativeness. Since 2014, it houses the first ever Feng Shui meeting room built in the Group.

37 Place Du Marché Saint-Honoré

The sleek 37 MSH building was designed by Catalan architect Ricardo Bofill in the 1990s after Paribas joined in the urban renewal project undertaken by the City of Paris. A stone's throw away from the 3 Rue d'Antin headquarters, it gave Paribas the opportunity to simplify its offices, which were spread out in different locations. The purpose-built and eye-catching architecture challenges

successfully the reconciling of modern technology and cultural heritage in a neighbourhood with deep historical significance. The temple-shaped building with its slender columns and steel framework echoes its farthest counterpart 14 Rue Bergère but its floor to ceiling double glass façade gives the whole structure, seen from the outside, a look of glittering transparency and fluidity: No mere banking hall just to deposit money but a covered passageway in the great tradition of the Parisian passages couverts that flourished during the 19th century until they were destroyed by the Haussmann era street redevelopment. Dubbed Passage des Jacobins, an implied reference to both the Dominican Convent and the French Revolution Club, it invites passersby in the manner of a roofed social plaza, where people can shop, gather, have lunch and a conversation. Paribas was not long to celebrate the iconic setting when, in January 1999, it launched the Euro with a street show staging zany parades and gaudy balloons. More recently in October 2014, the BNP Paribas Foundation held its 30th anniversary at lunchtime, showcasing patronized modern dance performers, new circus exponents and jazz musicians. It currently houses units of the Corporate and Institutional Banking activities. ●

Crédit Agricole

Anne Brunterch

The bank architecture, beyond its functional aspect, represents the identity, ambition and values of a bank. From this perspective, I chose to present three representative buildings in the history of CRÉDIT AGRICOLE GROUP, comprised of multiple roots, which gradually converged.

Crédit Agricole SA - Campus Evergreen

12, place des Etats-Unis
92545 Montrouge – France

Reconciling history, modernity and ecological ambition, right next to Paris

Since 2010, the Crédit Agricole Group created its holding company and began to group its subsidiaries in a campus located in Montrouge, near Paris. This site, named Evergreen, already houses 5,500 employees of the banking group. There will be 9,000 employees in 2016. It covers eight hectares (approximately 20 acres) of which half have been preserved to make a huge garden.

A hundred-year-old industrial site

In 1916, the Compagnie pour la Fabrication des Compteurs et Matériel d'Usines à Gaz, with a capital of 9 million francs, decided to set up new workshops on a non-built area, partly made up of market gardens, of 60,000 m² in Montrouge.

Between 1919 and 1924, the company constructed 55,000 m² of workshops on the property and transferred, from 1921, the tooling of its two Parisian factories. The factory in Montrouge manufactured gas meters, water meters and electricity as well as electrical and thermal measuring devices. The administration building constructed by the engineers Darras and Jouanin along the Place des Etats-Unis, is typical of the industrial style of the time. The Compagnie des compteurs continued its development and in the 1960s, 6,000 people worked on the site.

In 1970, Schlumberger decided to diversify into industrial measurement and took



Compagnie des compteurs in Montrouge, circa 1930. © Archives Historiques de Crédit Agricole SA, fonds Crédit Agricole.

control of the Compagnie des compteurs. The new entity, called Compteurs Schlumberger, had 5000 employees in Montrouge. In 1977, it became Schlumberger Industrie and brought together the industrial productions: Enertec (electricity), Flonic (water metering) and Sereg (control equipment). At that time, the site of Montrouge also hosted Schlumberger Technology, which was dedicated to research and high-tech services (smart card, data transmission by optical fiber, etc.).

The transformation into a business park

The industrial productions were transferred to the countryside in 1983 and the former workshops were destroyed, releasing a vast central space. In 1984, Jean Riboud, Chief executive officer of Schlumberger, decided to redesign the site completely and gave this task to two international personalities: Renzo Piano for the architectural part and Alexandre Chemetoff for the landscape.

The style of Renzo Piano was reflected in the interpretation of Terra and Aqua buildings that have tubular structures. At the heart of the new campus, he imagined the

Forum (staff restaurant) and its white canopies, like a nomadic structure in the middle of the city. Alexandre Chemetoff created a park with cascading ponds, canals and bridges that housed abundant flora and fauna. Nature was integrated harmoniously with the professional space.

In 1989, the new 'park Schlumberger' was listed by the Ministry of Culture in the pre-inventory of remarkable gardens. The list of remarkable parks and gardens of France was drawn up from 1981 by the Ministry of Infrastructure and then by the Ministry of Environment and Ecology in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture.

In 2005, the investment fund Carlyle acquired the site and launched a redesign by hiring the architects Wilmotte & Associés and Sahuc & Katchoura. The goal was to create a business site, modern and environmentally friendly, while maintaining its historic character instead.

In 2008 Carlyle delivered the first tranche of its Evergreen program, which was acquired by Crédit Agricole SA on December 10th, 2009.



*Campus Evergreen, Forum by Renzo Piano.
© 2016 Crédit Agricole S.A. - Direction de la
Communication Groupe.*



*Campus Evergreen © 2016 Crédit Agricole S.A. -
Direction de la Communication Groupe.*



*Hôtel des Italiens, Façade on the Boulevard des
Italiens, 1993. © Paul Maurer, Archives Historiques
de Crédit Agricole SA, fonds LCL.*

The eco-friendly campus by Crédit Agricole

Business sites of this size are rare in the city center, or even near Paris. The Evergreen campus, Crédit Agricole S.A.'s head office in Montrouge, is an innovative site with several ambitions:

- A managerial ambition, based in particular on a participative and innovative approach in a decompartmentalised space open to dialogue between managers working alongside their teams.
- An economic ambition, based on the principle of cost optimization, regarding energy, water and raw materials, including paper.
- A human ambition, based on a range of solutions that meet the main expectations of employees and enhance their well-being in the workplace, including a concierge service, a media library, a gym and banking services.

Evergreen campus is particularly suited to meet the environmental ambition of Crédit Agricole. Aiming at creating a small ecological footprint, the campus is part of a sustainable development approach, following the repository HQE (High Environmental Quality).

The acquisition of the site by Crédit Agricole SA was followed by a restructuring program, including in particular the development of new landscaped areas in line with the site and surrounding land.

The flora species are numerous and are, in some cases, remarkable. The site also serves as a breeding area for birds. The site benefits, in addition to its size and proximity to Paris, from its high ecological value. As such, the green spaces and basins are classified as a 'protected area'.

LCL¹ – '19 LCL' / Hôtel des Italiens
19, boulevard des Italiens
75002 Paris – France

A historical monument open to public

In November 2015, the Hôtel des Italiens, a historical building of the Crédit Lyonnais located at 19 Boulevard des Italiens became the '19 LCL'. It is open to casual visitors, business activities and events.

The historical heart of the Crédit Lyonnais in Paris

Founded in 1863 in Lyon by Henri Germain, the Crédit Lyonnais had its first address in Paris in 1864. In search of a prestigious location to establish its Paris branch, it acquired in September 1875, the former Hôtel de Boufflers, situated on the Boulevard des Italiens between the Rue de Choiseul and the Impasse de la Glacière. The location was ideal. It was in a district where the banking business was concentrated around the Bourse and not far from the Banque de France but also near the newspaper headquarters such as 'Le Temps' and the Opera, opened in January 1875.

Henri Germain wanted Crédit Lyonnais to be seen by all in order to attract great numbers of potential customers in Paris. To achieve this, it was necessary to create a prestigious architectural achievement. William Bouwens van der Boijen, an architect known in financial circles and who had already worked for the bank, was put in charge of the construction work.

Bouwens moved quickly. Work began on June 1st, 1876, and the official opening took place twenty-two months later on March 21st, 1878, in the presence of Léon Gambetta. But Crédit Lyonnais grew rapidly (the same year,

it became the largest French bank by total assets), and had to already foresee the expansion of its branches. The bank embarked on a major acquisitions campaign to acquire an additional 5,000 m² and on the November 5th, 1880, Crédit Lyonnais obtained a building permit from the Paris town council for the expansion of its premises.

William Bouwens presented a monumental project that impressed the management and aroused the enthusiasm of the greatest architects of the time, such as Charles Garnier (the architect of the Opera) and Théodore Ballu (responsible for the Eglise de la Trinité and the reconstruction of the Hôtel de Ville). Bouwens combined the use of modern materials such as iron and glass with an architectural project in a Neo-Renaissance style. Once again, the work was completed quickly because the builders were able to work round the clock thanks to the availability of electricity.

In 1882, when the building was nearing completion, it was decided that the Paris branch would be used as the Head Office. At the end of May 1883, Parisians discovered the new Crédit Lyonnais building.

An architecture combining elegance and modernity

The façade now extended for 68 metres along the Boulevard des Italiens. The building displayed all its decorative wealth, symbolizing the growing power of Crédit Lyonnais in the opulence of the Third Republic. The central pavilion, rising to a commanding height of 36 metres, was directly inspired by the Palais du Louvre or more accurately, by the Pavillon de l'Horloge. The openings were framed with columns and caryatids on two floors supporting a curved pediment decorated with allegorical figures. The town of

¹ The Crédit Lyonnais joined the Crédit Agricole Group in 2003 and became LCL (Le Crédit Lyonnais) in 2005.

Lyons (or the Bank) distributes funds in front of the languid figures of the Rhône and the Seine to the left and the allegoric figures of Commerce and Industry to the right. This group was sculpted by Camille Lefèvre, Second Grand Prix de Rome in 1878. At the corner of the Rue de Gramont, a rotunda has complemented the facade to maintain the symmetry of the whole.

From the Boulevard des Italiens, visitors now entered through a wide corridor lined with two large identical halls with a height of 21 metres and an area of 250 m² each, where they found open counters in the English style, neither with grids nor glass partitions. This innovative arrangement of offices surrounding the public hall allowed direct contact with customers. Large glazed roofs allowed in beautiful light that lit the entrance hall leading to a monumental double spiral staircase, directly inspired by the staircase in the Château de Chambord. A glass dome overlooked the staircase with a height of 30 metres.

The first floor was reserved for Board members and management. The rooms here were appointed with a simplicity (mahogany panelling and doors and green rep curtains) that owed much to the English mother of the architect. Those departments which had no contact with the public were grouped on the upper floors with the correspondence and accounts department on the second floor, the portfolio and collecting departments on the third, and, on the fourth, the financial studies department. It was here, under the eaves, that Henri Germain had his office.

Modern technology had been implemented in the interests of comfort and safety: since 1882 the premises had been equipped with electricity; daylight reached cellars through floors made of frosted glass, manufactured by Saint-Gobain; stoves and ventilation systems were installed in the attics; there were water points and alarm bells in case of fire; as well as a flooding mechanism for the securities storeroom...As for the glass roof in the great hall, which generated great differences in temperature, this was protected from the sun by a system of canopies and even by irrigation of the dome's sloping surfaces.

The Head Office had several extensions before its completion by the architects Victor Laloux and André Narjoux in 1913. The building then occupied the quadrilateral formed by the Boulevard des Italiens, the Rue de Gramont, Rue de Choiseul and the Rue du Quatre-Septembre, with a floor area of 9800 m². It was the largest civilian building in Paris.

The Hôtel des Italiens was listed on the supplementary Register of Historic Monuments once in 1977 and again in 1989: the facade, the roof, the main staircase, the Board Room, halls and the entrance hall are all protected architectural elements.

A renovated historical monument

Since its creation, the building has been open to customers. In May 1996, a major fire damaged a large part of the building overlooking the rue du Quatre-Septembre. Following this disaster, the Crédit Lyonnais sold this part of its Head Office to AIG which renamed it 'the Centorial'. The building was divided into two areas which are not linked and was closed to the public. The Crédit Lyonnais retained the historical heart of the building, named the Hôtel des Italiens.

In 2010, LCL transferred its executive management to its new Head Office in Villejuif. It was an opportunity to undertake the renovation of the Hôtel des Italiens. Working closely with the Architecte des bâtiments de France, the central pavilion has been totally renovated, the facade cleaned and highlighted, and the interior redesigned. In 2015, the Hôtel des Italiens renamed '19 LCL' has regained its original vocation as a customer reception. In addition, it is also open to passing visitors who wish to discover this historical monument of banking architecture. It is now part of Parisian architectural heritage.

Credit Agricole CIB – New York

1301 Avenue of the Americas
10019 New York City, New York, USA.

A witness of the construction of the Credit Agricole's Corporate and Investment Bank

Crédit Agricole CIB's US headquarters is named the Crédit Agricole CIB Building. It was earlier known as the Calyon Building and the Crédit Lyonnais Building as well as the J.C. Penney Building. It is a 609 ft. tall skyscraper developed by Uris Brothers. This



Hôtel des Italiens, details of the main staircase, 1993. © Paul Maurer, Archives Historiques de Crédit Agricole SA, fonds LCL.

building was completed in 1964 and has 45 floors. Shreve, Lamb & Harmon Associates designed the building, which is the 87th tallest in New York City.

The Crédit Lyonnais building

When the enormous retailing concern of J. C. Penney moved its headquarters to Plano, Texas, in 1988, it left behind an empty office tower. Tishman Speyer Properties of Manhattan and the Trammell Crow Company of Dallas bought the tower at auction in May 1988 for \$353 million and began an ambitious renovation. At the same time, the Crédit Lyonnais, established in Wall Street since 1975, was looking for new premises. In 1991 the bank occupied 225,000 square feet of the J.C. Penney Building and renamed it the Crédit Lyonnais building. The building was refitted by the architectural firm of Skidmore, Owings and Merrill. Sculpture for a street-level plaza was decided upon and Jerry I. Speyer, who is both president of Tishman Speyer Properties and a member of the board of trustees of the nearby Museum of Modern Art, commissioned works by Jim Dine. What he produced was three bronze figures that are 14, 18 and 23 feet high and that resemble the famous Venus de Milo, minus her head. The statues named by Jim Dine "Looking Toward the Avenue," were on show in the building's main entrance. The refitting of the management offices and reception rooms was the work of interior designer, Michel Boyer.



Hôtel des Italiens, Board Room. © LCL. - Direction de la Communication.

The building provided over 1.7 million square feet of first-class office space that included approximately 30,000 square feet of ground floor and concourse level retail space. Additionally, its tenants had a lower level access to Rockefeller Center, with its many upscale retail shops, fine dining establishments and subway connections. The building also offered abundant natural light on all floors along with magnificent views of Central Park and other Midtown landmarks. The impressive double-height, glass-enclosed lobby had a rolled silver leaf ceiling, mahogany walls and granite floors.

The Calyon building

In May 2003, the friendly takeover bid presented by Crédit Agricole SA for Crédit Lyonnais was a success. So, in May 2004, the new Crédit Agricole Group's Corporate and Investment Bank was created by the partial transfer of assets from the corporate and investment banking division of the Crédit Lyonnais to Crédit Agricole Indosuez.

In February 2010, Calyon was rebranded as Crédit Agricole Corporate & Investment Bank (CA CIB).

Credit Agricole CIB's American headquarters

Today, the building houses Credit Agricole CIB which offers a full range of Corporate and Investment Banking expertise to large corporate clients and financial institutions through several dedicated product lines:

Debt Optimization and Distribution origination; Structuring and distributing syndicated loans, bilateral facilities and term loans A and B; It acts as a primary underwriter and is active on the secondary market to provide liquidity to investors; Origination of Structured Finance and complex financing with a particular focus and expertise in the energy, infrastructure, transportation, real estate, and lodging sectors.

The Global Markets Division has a strong expertise in foreign exchange, interest rates including Repos, USD Government and Corporate bonds, Private Placements, securitization solutions through ABCP conduits or term ABS.

The Global Investment Banking Division includes M&A Advisory and Equity Capital Markets, which deal with the equity primary market, strategic equity transactions, and structured financial solutions.

The Commercial Banking & Trade Division provides commercial banking solutions as well as export and trade financing.

The Crédit Agricole Group's International Development Department in the United States is also located in this building. The department assists Crédit Agricole's mid-cap corporate customers with their international operations, by providing expertise on the local environment as well as by securing access to a wide spectrum of banking services abroad.

To conclude, the story of these three buildings is representative of the Crédit Agricole Group's long-standing values and identity:



New-York City, Crédit Lyonnais Building , Grand staircase. © Paul Maurer, Archives Historiques de Crédit Agricole SA, fonds LCL.



New-York City, Crédit Lyonnais Building , view of a sculpture by Jim Dine, 1993. © Paul Maurer, Archives Historiques de Crédit Agricole SA, fonds LCL.

its universal customer-focused retail banking model – based on cooperation between its retail banks and their related business lines – designed to support its customers' projects in France and around the world; its attention to the welfare of its employees; its dynamic, innovative corporate social responsibility policy for the benefit of the economy. ●

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Commerzbank and Frankfurt am Main

Detlef Krause

Commerzbank was originally founded in Hamburg in 1870 by a number of businessmen, merchant bankers and private bankers, from Hamburg, Frankfurt am Main and New York. The new venture was a universal bank in the form of a joint-stock company. In 1929, the two big banks Commerzbank and Mitteldeutsche Creditbank in Frankfurt am Main joined forces. The merger enabled Commerzbank to expand its business into southern Germany.

The Mitteldeutsche Creditbank was founded by the Frankfurt private bankers Wilhelm Jäger, S. M. Schwarzschild, Siegmund and Rudolph Sulzbach and Jakob Isaac Weiller, together with Lieben Königswarter from Hamburg, Becker & Comp. from Leipzig and B. M. Strupp from Meiningen. On 26 March 1856, a ministerial announcement from the Duchy of Saxony-Meiningen published a concession to establish the Mitteldeutsche Creditbank. Like the Bank für Handel und Industrie in Darmstadt, the new entity was forced to relocate, in this case to the nearby Thuringian duchy, because the Frankfurt senate was not issuing any concessions to establish joint-stock banks. The agency of banker Carl August Siebert represented the bank in Frankfurt, and the agency was converted into a branch in 1873.

The Mitteldeutsche Creditbank was also entitled to issue banknotes, but stopped doing so after the banking law of 14 March 1875 restricted the business scope of issuing banks. It then concentrated on building up corporate financing and placing German and international government and municipal bonds. As the bank expanded, its headquarters were transferred from Meiningen to Frankfurt am Main. It moved in 1886 into a building designed by the architect Eugen Rückgauer and built by Philipp Holzmann AG at Neue Mainzer Strasse 32. This was a broad-fronted building, grander than its neighbours, with an elegant facade featuring renaissance, baroque and early classical elements. The central block was given



Mitteldeutsche Creditbank in Frankfurt, 1913. © Commerbank AG.

the appearance of projecting from the rest of the building, which was reinforced by the side wings being slightly lower. The main entrance was on the right hand side of the central block, providing access to the rectangular counter hall on the ground floor. The boardrooms and conference rooms on the first floor had rounded gables above the windows and on the second floor corbels supported balustrades. The second floor was used for the accommodation of the board of directors. Above this, richly decorated mezzanine windows and a projecting cornice with a vertical balustrade rounded off the building, which was reminiscent of the Petit Trianon in Versailles.

With equity capital of 24.2 million Reichsmark and some 40 business premises, the Mitteldeutsche Creditbank was one of the smaller leading German banks in the 1920s. It merged with Commerzbank in 1929, the latter having an equity-capital base of 95.6 million Reichsmark. Commerzbank was founded in 1870 as Commerz- und Disconto-Bank in Hamburg. Around 1900, it became one of the leading major Berlin banks. The

name was changed to Commerz- und Privat-Bank in 1920 and twenty years later to Commerzbank Aktiengesellschaft. In order to maintain a presence in the two financial centres Frankfurt am Main and Berlin, the bank purchased the Frankfurt bank J. Dreyfus & Co. in 1897, including the Berlin branch which continued to operate. The Frankfurt branch became a limited partnership under the name of J. Dreyfus & Co. in 1903, for an agreed period of only five years, and Commerzbank maintained a share in it.

In 1920 Commerzbank opened its own branch in Frankfurt at Schillerplatz 5-7. One of the first managers was Carl Goetz, who subsequently moved to Dresdner Bank, and another manager was Hermann Schilling, who subsequently became a managing director of the Preußische Staatsbank (Seehandlung) and then a partner in Brinkmann, Wirtz & Co. The building no longer exists. When Commerzbank took over the Mitteldeutsche Creditbank in 1929, the two branches were merged to become the Mitteldeutsche Creditbank branch of Commerz- und Privat-Bank. Frankfurt remained one of



The counter hall was restored and re-opened in December 1949. © Commerbank AG.



In the early 60s, Commerzbank extended its headquarters in Frankfurt. © Commerbank AG.

the largest locations within the Commerzbank network after this merger. The former managing directors of the Mitteldeutsche Creditbank Friedrich Reinhart and Albert Katzenellenbogen became members of the Commerzbank board of managing directors.

The building in Neue Mainzer Strasse was badly damaged during the Second World War, but was re-opened in December 1949. The press reported:

'The old premises were destroyed during the war, and their practical but elegant successor has been designed to the latest standards by architect Karl Olsson. Nut and oak have been used for the furniture and wooden fittings, and the floors are of Solnhöfer tiles. The counters are of an Italian marble, portor. Two large overhead glass lights and modern Sistrach graduated lights ensure that the hall is bright even when it is dark outside or the weather is gloomy. An air-conditioning system has been installed, piping in pre-heated fresh air and removing the stale air.'

The Allies' decentralisation policy left Frankfurt as the administrative headquarters for southern Germany, with Hamburg and Düsseldorf the counterparts for northern and western Germany, respectively. The Frankfurt branch was designated as head office. In the early 1960s, the bank commissioned a new seven-storey building in Frankfurt. It was 60 metres long and roughly 15 metres deep, at a right angle to and slightly apart from the present building in Neue Mainzer Strasse. The two were connected by a wing at the rear. Architect Walter Maria

Schultz's reinforced concrete frame and glass facade were reminiscent of the New Building style of the 1920s. A wide staircase with a false bearing and a number of lifts led from the elegant entrance hall to the conference rooms on the first floor and the board's offices and conference rooms on the second floor. An atmosphere of impressive unobstructed vision was reinforced by the use of materials such as grey-green mica slate and a white marble surround for the glass facade. The flat roof of the building was designed as a roof garden for the use of the staff during breaks.

When the three regional successor institutions merged in 1958 to become Commerzbank AG, the focus of business was in Düsseldorf. However, in the early 1970s, it was decided to centralise the three administrative units located in Hamburg, Düsseldorf and Frankfurt to Frankfurt. The facilities available were too small and so were demolished to make way for a larger building. Richard Heil designed a structure consisting of two sections with a central core. The building, which was built between 1970 and 1974, was 28 storeys high and provided accommodation for some 1,400 staff. Mat bronze aluminium sheets with thin vertical lines and horizontal rows of windows gave the facade the appearance of a chess board. The 106 metre high building is still used today.

Commerzbank's legal domicile has been in Frankfurt since 1990, when in effect the process of centralisation was completed. As business expanded, the various

departments had to be located in a number of different premises around the town. To overcome this problem, British star architect Norman Foster, since 1999 Lord Foster of Thames Bank, was commissioned to design a new headquarters building. It is 259 metres high and was built by Hochtief from 1994 to 1997 on a site between Kaiserplatz, Grosse Gallusstrasse and Kirchnerstrasse. It has a steel framework based on 111 enormous piles, which go 48.5 metres into the ground. The shape is that of an equilateral triangle with rounded corners and slightly convex facades. The three wings, consisting of floor space and lift tracts, surround a triangular atrium. On every floor, two of the wings are used as office space and the third extends over four storeys as part of a 34 metre-long garden. The atrium and generous use of glass on the fronts makes the building light and airy, and the natural light and well-proportioned gardens lend it a slender appearance. There are nine gardens in all, alternating from wing to wing in a kind of spiral, and the structure peaks asymmetrically so that the tower stands out well from a distance. With the antenna on top, the building reaches a height of 300 metres. Between 1997 and 2003 it was the highest building in Europe.

Highly innovative technology has been incorporated in order to provide a pleasant environment for the staff and radically cut energy consumption. The tower is covered by a two-layer facade through which fresh air enters the interim space. The windows can be opened individually, allowing natural

ventilation up to the 50th floor. The ceiling panels have a water-based cooling system to cope with the summer heat, which responds to the indoor temperature. The offices are heated conventionally, with staff able to regulate the temperature in each office within a certain range. In 2009, the building received the Green Building Award.

The bank is entered via a three storey high foyer. Thomas Ende's multi-coloured 'fleece', the largest transportable picture ever, hangs on one wall. It measures 16.80 x 12.35 metres and is a strong focal point of attention. The work consists of 9.5 million tiny stalagmites of paint, each about 5mm high. Depending on where the viewer is standing, the picture appears either as a simple colour composition or as cumulus clouds in a summer sky with varying shades of colour. There is also a restaurant for staff, which is open to the public as well, and an auditorium covering over 2,600 m² for special events.

For roughly two decades, the bank's regional branch headquarters were in the Neue Mainzer Strasse building, but in 1999 the Frankfurt branch moved into its own premises at Kaiserstrasse 30. They were built in 1905 for the Deutsche Effecten- und Wechselbank, and have been lovingly restored at considerable expense by the architects Novotny, Mähner & Associates. The impressive frontage features five huge columns above the entrance and a neo-baroque gable with depictions of various allegories representing mining, heavy industry and crafts. Inside, the surroundings are modern but elegant. The large banking hall has a high ceiling with an art nouveau lamp hanging from an oval opening. Arched doorways, columns of artificial coloured marble, wrought-iron banisters and tinted glass panes harmonise well with the otherwise modern style.

In the 1980s, as banking became increasingly reliant on technology, it became apparent that a new technical centre would be needed. This is located a little way from the town centre in Mainzer Landstrasse and was designed by architects Franz Madreiter. Originally the building accommodated the organisational staff and the data-processing centre in a space totalling 17,000 m². About 17 years later, a new service centre was added to the complex to ensure that all trading activities could be conducted in one location. This was opened in 2001. The heart of the building is the trading room, 150 metres



Commerzbank's tower designed by Norman Foster was built in 1994–1997. © Commerzbank AG.

long, 25 metres wide and 6 metres high, accommodating up to 500 currency and securities traders. There is an open square between the two Commerzbank buildings, accessible via a passageway from Mainzer Landstrasse. ●

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Taunusanlage 12, Frankfurt am Main

More than just steel and concrete

Reinhard Frost

The 155-metre high Deutsche Bank Towers are a major landmark in Frankfurt's financial centre. Located at Taunusanlage 12, they were formally opened in 1985. Just about 20 years later, changes in fire regulations required a modernisation. After extensive analysis, the bank opted for a full refurbishment that would meet the highest environmental standards and offer a major improvement in energy efficiency. The interior was redesigned by the Milanese architect Mario Bellini, who recalls his first impressions of Deutsche Bank headquarters: 'The towers stood there like mighty monoliths on the skyline. They clearly had something very powerful and immense. But the closer I came, the more that feeling diminished.' He immediately recognised what was missing: 'There was no centre around which the space was arranged. There were lots of long corridors with doors left and right but no spatial hierarchy. It quickly became clear to all of us that there was a great deal of work to do here.' The renovation project began in 2008 and was the largest of its kind in Europe. More than 3,300 workers and engineers from 24 countries shaped 150 tons of steel and laid 12,000 kilometres of electrical cable. There were 20,000 truck journeys to and from the site. 99 per cent of materials were recycled – all in all, a mammoth project.

Green technology for the 21st century

After two years of extensive and radical renovation, the towers emerged as one of the most eco-friendly high-rise buildings in the world. The elevators generate their own electricity, the concrete provides cooling for the interior and every second window can now be opened. 'We developed a highly sustainable building, set the highest global standards in green construction, provided high-quality jobs, created a very open architectural space – and preserved a distinctive feature of the



Photo: Marburger-Helbig © Deutsche Bank AG

city skyline,' says Mario Bellini. Since the towers were completed in 2010, they have been the hallmark of a new era and a highly visible expression of the financial and ecological identity of a global institution which has always been aware of its social responsibility. From 2008, the bank reduced its carbon emissions by 20%-points year on year. By 2012, it had achieved full carbon neutrality worldwide.

More than 40% of global carbon emissions are generated by buildings alone. Deutsche Bank has approximately 4,000 offices, branches and other properties around the world, which are responsible for around 80% of the bank's own emissions – and offer huge potential for carbon savings. The bank is therefore committed to increasing energy efficiency and reducing its ecological footprint.

The renovation of the towers served as a pilot project for all other locations. Compared with the pre-renovation state, energy consumption has been reduced by half, water consumption by over 70% and carbon emissions by almost 90%. The towers were the world's first high-rise refurbishment project to receive the highest possible certifications of LEED Platinum and DGNB Gold for their resource and energy efficiency.

Symbol of a new era

From the outside, one might wonder what has actually changed. The 55,000-square-metre mirror-glass façade appears virtually untouched – yet it is arguably the most innovative aspect of the towers. The insulation is so efficient that heating is only required for about 60 days each year.

GERMANY

In the foyer between the towers, the space is dominated by the 30-ton 'Sphere', an intricately intertwined sculptural assembly of 1,400 precision-made parts. Its sweeping steel arcs symbolise stability and strength as well as the forces of dynamism and change. Above the sphere is a round, 18-metre-wide skylight that reveals the power and mass of the towers above while flooding the foyer with light. The foyer, the conference area and the BrandSpace – Deutsche Bank's forum for the brand – are all open to the public. The entire architectural structure is an open invitation – exactly as it was intended: 'We created a lot of links between the towers and the city. The new forecourt has a much friendlier feel. It's a space where people feel comfortable, that they like to walk through,' says Bellini. 'This new 'piazza' is now part of the towers just as the foyer is now part of the city. We've connected the towers with the city.'

An open invitation

Unusual: A bank that opens its doors to the public and invites people into its headquarters. This is precisely what happens at the Deutsche Bank Towers, home to a very special visitor attraction.

The BrandSpace is the first public brand forum created by a financial institution. Since 2011, it is open not only to clients, employees and partners of the bank but also for the general public. So far, more than 100,000 visitors have accepted the invitation and joined the guided tours.

The Deutsche Bank Towers are also home to the Deutsche Bank Collection of contemporary art. Now younger and more international than ever before, it is open to the public, e.g. via free guided tours. With some 1,500 prints, drawings and photographs by 100 artists from 40 countries on display in the Towers, the Deutsche Bank Collection takes the viewer on a journey through global art practice that can be continued at more than 900 other Deutsche Bank locations.

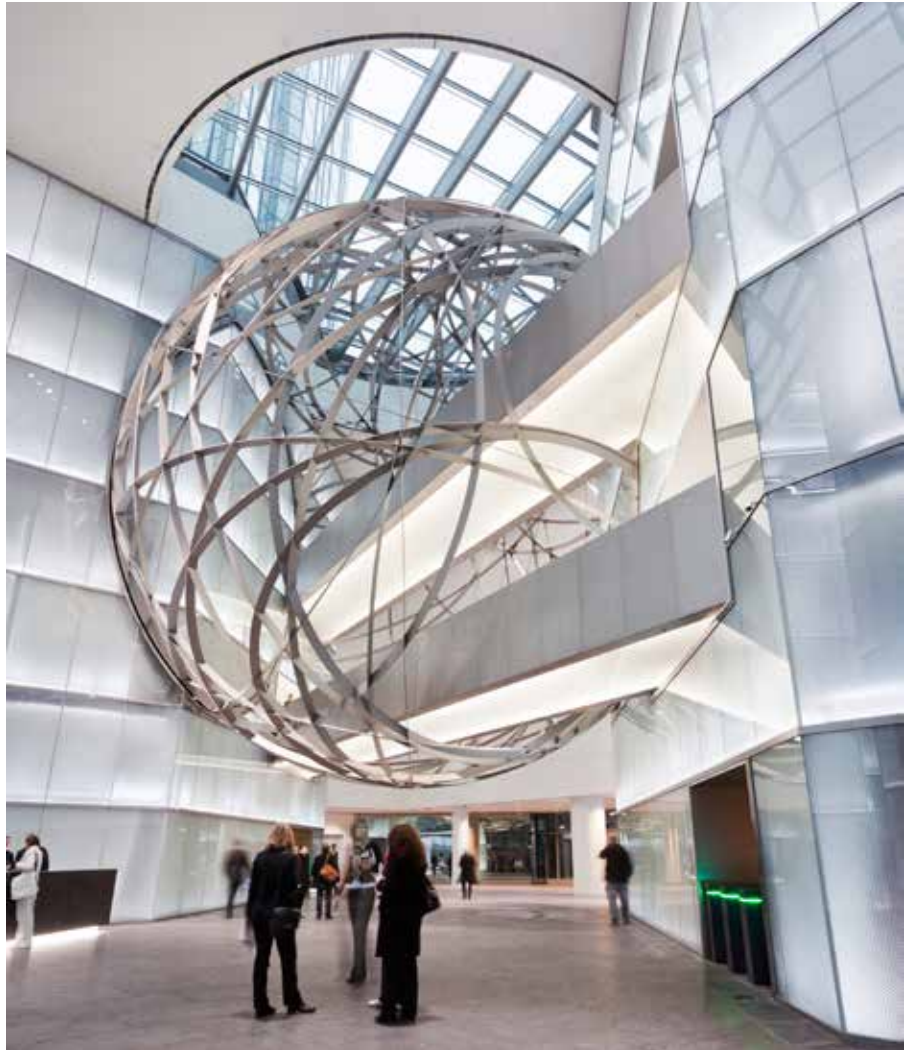
Finally, the Visitors' Forum offers presentations and guided tours where guests can learn more about Deutsche Bank and the Towers. ●

Art tours

For bookings, go to: www.db.com/art

BrandSpace

Opening hours: Monday-Friday, 9 am - 7 pm
www.the-brandspace.com



Photos: Marburger-Helbig. © Deutsche Bank AG

The Deutsche Bundesbank. Its Architecture and Art

Rolf Herget



Reichsbank building.



Extension to the Reichsbank building.



The building of the Reichsbank's Frankfurt main branch of the Bank deutscher Länder at Taunusanlage 4-6, (1948-1957).

Background

The battle for Berlin in April and May 1945 and the subsequent occupation of the former Reich capital by Soviet troops marked the end of both the Third Reich and the second world war. It also meant the end of the Reichsbank banking system, which had been founded in 1875, with its headquarters in Berlin (Reichsbank/Reichshauptbank) and network of subordinated regional branches.

Constructed between 1869 and 1876, the Reichsbank building in Jägerstrasse, Berlin, was destroyed by bombing during the war. Only the extension to the Reichsbank building, erected in Kurstrasse between 1934 and 1939, remained largely undamaged. In February 1933, the last free architectural competition to be held in Germany until 1945 was conducted among 30 of Germany's best-known architects (including Ludwig Mies van der Rohe and Walter Gropius from the Bauhaus movement) for the design of the extension building for some 5,000 employees. However, after six designs had been shortlisted, Hitler intervened to personally select plans previously drawn by Heinrich Wolff, the Reichsbank's inhouse architect. The foundation stone was laid by Adolf Hitler and Reichsbank president Hjalmar Schacht on 5 May 1934. Many guests of honour from the government and the Nazi party (NSDAP) attended the ceremony.

At the end of the war, this building was located in the Soviet sector of Berlin, and

served as the seat of the SED Central Committee of the GDR. It was eventually renamed 'Haus der Parlamentarier' (House of the Parliamentarians) in 1990. Today, the modernised steel frame construction, extended with an annex, houses the Federal Foreign Office.

After the war, the Allies ordered the formation of decentralised central bank structures in each of the western occupation zones, with headquarters in each zone. The Land Central Banks were established in the states within the western occupation zones, and the Bank deutscher Länder was set up in Frankfurt in 1948. It was mainly the central bank bodies and departments of the central office – for a while, together with the Allied Bank Commission – that until 1972 used the building of the former Frankfurt main branch of the Reichsbank (completed in 1933). That building, too, was designed by Heinrich Wolff, and was opened by Hans Luther, then president of the Reichsbank, after less than two years' construction.

New construction plans

It was relatively late – in the 1960s, in fact – before planning finally got underway in earnest to erect a new building for the Central Office and management bodies of the Frankfurt-based Deutsche Bundesbank, which had been established as Germany's central bank in 1957. Delays held back work for a number of reasons, even though the workforce of the Bundesbank's Central Office had

grown to around 2,000 by then and were spread throughout the city in no fewer than 19 cramped and sometimes dilapidated buildings. It thus became increasingly difficult for the Bank to operate efficiently under those circumstances.

One reason for the Bank's reticence in having new premises built lay in its monetary and economic policy mandate. Since the Bank had always opposed overheating in the construction sector during boom periods, it only wanted to carry out its own building project when activity in that sector was weakening. Having put off the project a number of times, the Bank gave the go-ahead to start building in early 1967, when a favourable opportunity finally arrived.

Perhaps the idea of East and West Germany becoming reunified in the foreseeable future no longer seemed feasible by that time. After all, the 1957 Bundesbank Act contained the obligation to locate the central bank at the seat of the German federal government. This provision was not repealed until 1991, when the Act was amended, and it would have meant transferring the Bundesbank to Berlin, then considered the potential seat of government for a reunified Germany.

The most important prerequisite for the building project, however, was the successful conclusion of many years' negotiations with the city of Frankfurt, enabling the Bank to buy around 93,000 m² of land – on which allotment gardens had previously



Deutsche Bundesbank (1957-1972) is today part of the Bundesbank's Regional Office in Hesse.



Model of the Bank building.



Reichsbank building View to the north with the Cash Department building in the foreground.



Main bank building from the south, showing the canteen and cafeteria.



Specialist library in the Nordbau.



Foyer of the guest-house.

been located – to the north of Frankfurt's city centre.

Following a call for tenders in 1961, Frankfurt architects Beckert & Becker were finally awarded the contract to build the Bank's new headquarters. The foundation stone was laid on 10 November 1967, and the topping out ceremony took place on 2 July 1969. The staff moved into their workplaces in the new Central Office building in 1972. It should be noted that the construction work was carried out at a time when office towers did not yet dominate the skyline of Germany's major banking hub. The Bundesbank building and that of the former chemicals manufacturer IG Farben, designed by Hans Poelzig and today part of the Goethe University, were then among the tallest architectural structures in Frankfurt.

Of the 83,000 m² of floor space, vaults covering a total area of 6,000 m² were spread over several floors both in and below the Cash Department building. Some of these areas were later used by parts of the Bank's IT Department (which has since relocated with their computing hardware to an external high security data centre) and the historical archives. Today, they are partly used to store the Bundesbank's gold reserves.

The long-planned office building quickly proved to be too small, however – a problem

that has persisted to this day. Although a number of annexes have been erected on the site, there is currently not nearly enough space to accommodate the workforce of the Bundesbank's Central Office, which has risen to more than 4,000 employees in the meantime.

Architecture

Today, the Bank's Central Office building presents a striking silhouette on the gentle slope of the Ginnheimer Höhe district in the north of Frankfurt. A continuation of the sprawling Grüneburg Park, and located close to the Palmengarten, the elongated building – 216 metres long but only 17 metres wide – is surrounded by an extensive green area. Some 53 meters in height, the 13-storey office building and the nearby television tower are clearly visible landmarks. Two vertical structural elements each housing six elevators divide the building into three sections and counteract the predominantly horizontal emphasis of the overall design. The construction is a uniform grid-work of exposed concrete, with recessed windows that have dark metal frames. Standing to the front of the main building, the squat, four-storeyed, cuboid Cash Department building and the guest-house follow the same design idiom.

The architecture of the original three Bundesbank buildings of the 1970s (main

building, Cash Department building and guest-house) is in the tradition of classical modernism and belongs to the Brutalist style. This crude-sounding name has its origin in French architect Le Corbusier's term 'beton brut', meaning the grey unfinished surface of the raw reinforced concrete, which he himself frequently used as a design feature. This 'honest architecture' movement, which favoured clear structures and the use of unclad building materials while dispensing with decoration and ornamentation, gained popularity both in Germany and internationally during the 1960s and 1970s.

The growing number of tasks conferred upon the Bundesbank necessitated an ever larger workforce at the Bank's Central Office. As a result, what was originally a strictly modern ensemble has since been joined by more and more annexes. One such building (the 'Nordbau') stands in front of the main building to accommodate, among other things, the Money Museum and the publicly accessible library. Over the years, other purely functional office buildings have been erected to the south and east.

The original guest-house, which also contains a gym hall, a swimming pool and a recently added kindergarten, has not undergone any alterations that would compromise its architectural integrity. Although three



Installation in the entrance hall.

apartments have been converted, the style of the facade has largely remained intact.

Art

Even before construction of the main building had been completed, a uniform approach was agreed with regard to the art chosen to go on display there. The Bank tasked an Art Advisory Council with procuring contemporary artworks that would give 'the entire building an atmosphere that is open to new ideas'. Three architecture-related works were commissioned – an installation by Jesús Rafael Soto, an interior design by Victor Vasarely and two large tapestries by Max Ernst.

Soto (1923-2005) was a Venezuelan painter and sculptor. From 1950 he lived and worked in Paris and Caracas, and from the 1960s onwards was one of the leading proponents of kinetic art and Op art (Optical art) in South America and Europe. The east-facing end of the spacious entrance hall features a two-coloured kinetic sculpture and a ceiling installation with integrated lighting.

The interior of the 13th floor, with meeting rooms and dining rooms, is still largely in its original state, its design defined by clear grid patterns and structures. The dining room was designed by the Hungarian painter and graphic artist Victor Vasarely



Interior design.

(1906-1997) and his son. With its coated plastic and aluminium discs, it is a typical assemblage of contemporary art.

The former meeting room of the Central Bank Council is decorated with two wall-filling tapestries based on designs by the renowned German painter, graphic artist and sculptor, Max Ernst (1891-1996). Crafted in the French carpet-weaving town of Aubusson, the works take their cue from collages in which the artist combines elements of his own artworks from the 1920s.

The architecture-related artworks aside, art has been made a key aspect of the entire Bundesbank; for many of the Bank's staff, it is part and parcel of their working environment. 'Art belongs in the workplace, too. Here, it counteracts the uniformity that is characteristic of many office blocks and towers – including our own. Here, art encourages us to engage with it, to grapple with its meaning,' Bundesbank President Karl Otto Pöhl wrote in the foreword of the book on German 20th century art at the Deutsche Bundesbank, which the Bank published in 1988.

The Bundesbank demonstrated cultural open-mindedness when, as early as the 1950s, it set about building up a contemporary art collection. Since then, the Bank has acquired several thousand works on a budget which, as befits a public institution, was relatively modest. With the exception of artworks reserved for the Bank's more imposing rooms, all staff members are free to choose art from the collection for their offices. Once selected, many of the works accompany employees throughout their career. The Bundesbank sometimes buys works specifically by established artists such as Georg Baselitz, Markus Lüpertz, Jörg Immendorf and Gerhard Richter. On the other hand, it also holds regular exhibitions for young artists. This gives them a platform to present their work, and at the same time brings interested staff members face-to-face with contemporary art. As a matter of fact, I



Meeting room with tapestry.

have had two paintings by Heinz Kreutz in my office for a good few years now.

A variety of sculptures and other objects, some of which were originally to be seen at branches that are now closed, are dotted about the grounds surrounding the main building. ●

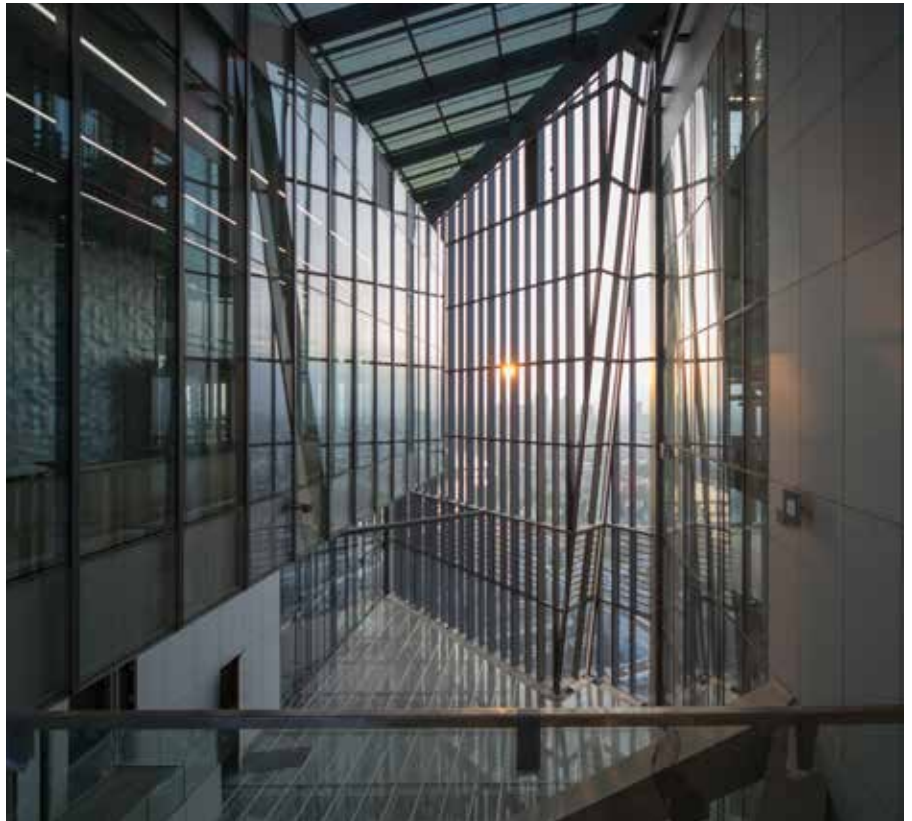
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The new ECB premises. Architecture and design

The design of the Vienna-based architects COOP HIMMELB(L)AU comprises three architecturally interlinked elements: (i) the Grossmarkthalle (Frankfurt's former wholesale market hall), (ii) the office tower, and (iii) an entrance building that connects the two other elements. The building ensemble also includes an underground car park and ancillary buildings such as the entry control points and the logistics centre. The total gross floor area of the new ECB premises amounts to approximately 185,000 m².

The competition brief and final decision focused on the functionality and sustainability of the new premises, and these key aspects continued to play an important role in the subsequent design and implementation phases. The structural and spatial design of the new premises has created a working environment that meets various functional requirements and facilitates open communication, thus promoting teamwork and interaction at every level. At the same time, the structural and spatial flexibility of the design means that changing requirements can be adapted to with little effort.



Atrium © ECB / Robert Metsch.

The Grossmarkthalle

The Grossmarkthalle was built between 1926 and 1928, on the basis of the design of Martin Elsaesser, Director of Town Planning for the City of Frankfurt am Main at the time. Until 4 June 2004 it housed a wholesale fruit and vegetable market. The former market hall, which has been a listed building since 1972, formed an integral part of the design for the ECB's new premises. Having been fully restored, the building has retained its fundamental appearance and now houses the more public areas of the ECB. The new main entrance leads to the hall area, which contains semi-public facilities, such as a visitor centre, the lobby, a cafeteria, a conference area and a staff restaurant. The new facilities have been integrated into the hall at an angle, based on a 'house-in-house' concept. This has not only provided access to parts of the Grossmarkthalle, but has also created manifold spaces

between the outer shell of the hall and the structures inside it.

Office tower

To the south of the Grossmarkthalle, two polygonal towers are joined by a glass atrium to form an office tower, which soars to a height of 185 m. The north tower has 45 floors, while the south tower has 43. The top office floor is at level 41, above which there are the services floors.

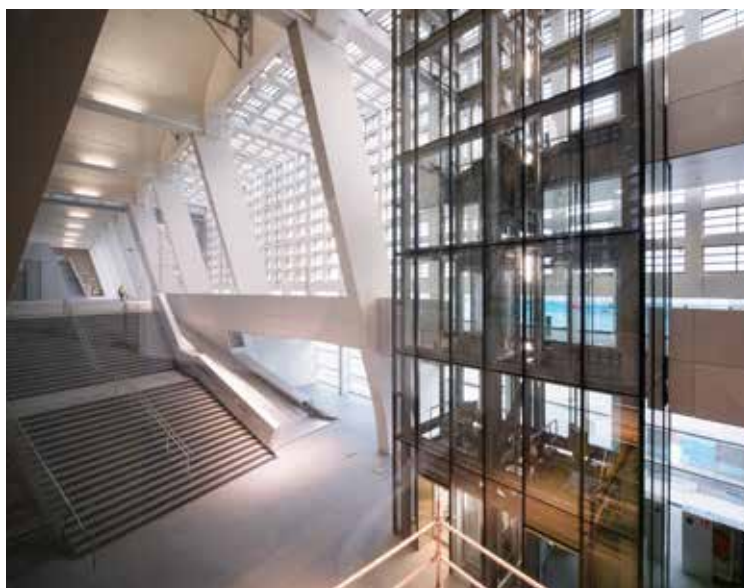
With its height and distinctive silhouette, the new high-rise complements Frankfurt's skyline. The concept behind the glazed atrium between the two office towers is one of a 'vertical city', with interchange platforms and bridges creating the impression of urban streets and squares. The interchange platforms enable people to change from the express lifts to the local lifts and divide the atrium into three

sections of varying height (between 45 m and 60 m). They can be reached via sets of stairs leading from the respective floors above and below, making it easy for staff to move between the two towers and communicate with each other on an informal level.

The two towers house the vast majority of workplaces at the new premises (maximum 2,900) and internal meeting rooms. The large council meeting room and the offices of members of the ECB's decision-making bodies are located on the upper office floors. All floors offer a high level of flexibility to allow for a variety of office configurations, from single offices to larger offices that can accommodate 10 to 12 people. The offices are located along the outer facades of the towers, and on every floor there is a kitchenette and communal area.



ECB-Premises, Ensemble © ECB / Robert Metsch.



Conference area © ECB / Robert Metsch.

Entrance building

The entrance building marks the main entrance to the ECB on Sonnemannstrasse, creating an aesthetic and functional link between the office tower and the Grossmarkt halle. With its asymmetrical design, inclined facades and generously proportioned windows, it forms a clearly identifiable main entrance to the ECB from the north of the site.

The entrance building itself houses the press centre, from where the ECB's press conferences are broadcast. The two-storey press centre is accessible via a lobby, above which there are temporary workstations for journalists. There is also a second auditorium next to the large press conference room. ●



Air view © ECB/Andreas Böttcher.



Grossmarkthalle © ECB / Robert Metsch.

Metzler Bank in Frankfurt/Main: Festina lente. Only five headquarter locations in over 340 years

Berenike Seib

B. Metzler seel. Sohn & Co. KGaA can look back on over 340 years of history. During this time, it has survived several crises and wars, has grown and evolved, and to this day, it is still owned exclusively by the founding family. In all this time, the bank has changed the location of its headquarters only four times. All locations were chosen with great caution and careful planning – faithful to the von Metzler family motto ‘Festina lente’ or ‘more haste, less speed’. The path the Metzler Bank followed through the city of Frankfurt/Main paints an image of Frankfurt’s urban development in past centuries.

The history of the bank began in Frankfurt’s old town, the political and economic center of Frankfurt. The Messehof, formerly a trading hall for Roman merchants and now Frankfurt City Hall (called the Roemer), was the center of Frankfurt’s original trade fair. City council acquired the Messehof in 1405 and settled its headquarters there. The coronations of the Emperors of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation took place in the nearby cathedral. Due mainly to immigration, the population of Frankfurt doubled to 20,000 at the beginning of the 17th century. Most immigrants were Dutch refugees having fled from Antwerp, a leading trading city at the time, on account of their faith. They brought not only money and economic expertise with them to the free imperial city of Frankfurt but also a solid network, leading their new hometown into a golden age. They settled mostly in the old town, the most popular district among natives as well. Population density was extremely high there, the streets were tight, and many houses were narrow with additional floors added on top that hung way over the edges of the lower floors. It was precisely this lively district that Benjamin Metzler (1650–1686) chose for his company’s headquarters. In 1674, Benjamin Metzler, a pastor’s son from the Saxon town of Cranzahl, founded a cloth trading company specialized on long-distance



From 1784 to 1826, Metzler’s third headquarter location was situated in this building, initially without any specific street address and later named ‘Am Salzhaus 3’.
© Metzler Bank, Frankfurt/Main, Historical Archive.

trade and based in Frankfurt. For company headquarters, he acquired a two-story building with seven rooms in Kornblumengasse not far from the Liebfrauenberg, a square in the historical old town of Frankfurt. In addition to warehouse and office space on the ground floor, this building provided living quarters for the family and a basement. Benjamin Metzler traded mostly linens and woolen cloth, but also yarn, flax and finished garments. Frankfurt with its century-old tradition as a trade fair town was the most suitable location for this merchant to start his enterprise. In the 17th century, trading activities were mostly focused on forwarding and commission business, thus commodity and financial transactions were closely connected. At the Metzler enterprise, money and exchange transactions were part of the business from the very start. Like Metzler, many

private banking institutions of today have their origins in trading as this demanded high competency in financial matters. Over time, the importance of commodity trading moved more and more to the back burner.

Benjamin Metzler’s sons did business out of the building in the Kornblumengasse until 1707. Twelve years later the building burned down in the so-called ‘Christenbrand’ (Christian fire). It seems the property was still in possession of the family at the time. Large sections of the old town were destroyed in the fire, and the city therefore issued new building regulations that redefined the cityscape in the years that followed. In March 1944, the entire area was destroyed for the second time in Allied bombing raids. Located on the site today is Frankfurt’s Kleinmarkthalle farmers’ market, which is well known far beyond the city limits.

The second location for Metzler's headquarters was even more centrally located in the heart of Frankfurt's old town. In 1707, the founder's oldest son, Johann Jeremias Metzler (1677–1743), acquired a house called 'Zum vorderen neuen Loeweneck' in the Kaelbergasse located far behind the Roemer (City Hall). It had been built right after the Thirty Years' War and got its name from the stone lion figures on both front corners of the house. Other details of the house are unknown, but its immediate neighborhood is noteworthy. The neighboring building 'Zum alten Loeweneck' was acquired in 1778 by Peter Heinrich Bethmann called Metzler (1744–1800), brother of family patriarch Friedrich Metzler (1749–1825). Thus, Frankfurt's most prominent banking institutions at the time were presided over by two brothers. While the Bethmann Bank placed its first bond issue worth over a million for the German Emperor in Vienna in 1779, the Metzlers also entered the fast growing and profitable government bond business and became prominent financiers in Prussia. As early as 1738, Johann Jeremias Metzler termed himself 'merchand banquier', i.e. a tradesman dealing not only in goods but also in bills of exchange. In 1760, the title 'banquiers' was finally introduced in business correspondence, and thus the trading company became a firm of bankers.

With increased city growth, the Metzlers slowly moved away from the crowded old town. In 1782, Friedrich Metzler sold the property in the Kaelbergasse but continued to do business there for at least another two years. Between 1900 and 1908, the Kaelbergasse and all of its surrounding buildings were demolished and the new city hall was built on these premises.

Until well into the 18th century, Frankfurt's new town had the flair of a suburb with dispersed development and partly agricultural land. Initially this area had been on the other side of the city wall. In 1333, Emperor Ludwig the Bavarian (1282/1286–1347) granted permission to expand the city area and a new city wall with magnificent city gates was erected. In the years that followed, the new city area filled only slowly with streets and buildings, and the popular old town remained the most attractive district for residents. It was not until the 18th century that the balance gradually shifted between old and new town, and vigorous building



The last photo of the neoclassical building at Grosse Gallusstrasse 18 before it was destroyed in Allied bombings on March 18, 1944. © Metzler Bank, Frankfurt/Main, Historical Archive.

activity by Frankfurt's wealthy townspeople started to take place in the new town. The most renowned example from this time was the erection of Goethe's house in Grosser Hirschgraben in 1755/56. Not far from that, Friedrich Metzler acquired a property in 1784 which had no specific name or house number. It was located on the south side of the connecting alleyway between Rossmarkt and Grosser Hirschgraben. The building had a large archway on the left side of the facade and was later named 'Am Salzhaus 3'. During these years, Friedrich Metzler completed the final transition of the family enterprise from a trading company to a bank and led it into its first blossoming phase. The building Am Salzhaus 3, which was completely destroyed in the bombings of March 1944 and rebuilt again in the post-war period, has been home to the Rosen Apothecary since its sale in 1826.

After the Napoleonic Wars, the new town became Frankfurt's economic and political center. On Prince-Primate Karl Theodor von Dalberg's (1744–1817) orders in 1806, the city was rid of its fortress-like status and surrounded by green embankments. As a result, new districts were created and attractive building plots became available to the affluent citizens, businessmen and bankers of Frankfurt. One of these new buildings was a neoclassical residential and

office building erected in 1810 at Grosse Gallusstrasse 18 by Frankfurt architect Philipp Jakob Hoffmann (1778–1834). The previous year, the city's head architect Johann Christian Hess (1756–1816) had drawn up new construction statutes for the city of Frankfurt that defined neoclassical design as the compulsory building style for all of Frankfurt. The building at Grosse Gallusstrasse 18 met these expectations in full. Johann Friedrich Metzler (1780–1864), Friedrich Metzler's oldest son, acquired the building in 1826 and moved the bank's headquarters there within the year. Five years later, Georg Friedrich Metzler (1806–1889) joined the bank's management. Under his leadership and that of his sons, the bank's securities trading and custodian business boomed.

Grosse Gallusstrasse was first mentioned in the 14th century, initially as an undeveloped road. For many years it was called 'Galgengasse' (Gallows Alley) because it led to the gallows located on the city outskirts near where the main train station stands today. On their way to the gallows, delinquents were led down Galgengasse and through the 'Galgentor' (Gallows Gate), a part of the city wall and the most magnificent of the five large city gates. In 19th century Frankfurt, Grosse Gallusstrasse was known as 'Millionärsgrasse' (Millionaire's Alley) due to its many wealthy settlers, and

the intersecting street Neue Mainzer Strasse carried the noble name 'Frankfurt Lombard Street' due to the many banks settled there. These two streets later formed the nucleus of Frankfurt's banking district, with banking institutions like Staedel, Hauck and Grunelius also settled here.

Despite several renovations, the property in Grosse Gallusstrasse remained basically unchanged for almost 120 years. Through a large semi-circular arch, one could enter the inner courtyard from the Grosse Gallusstrasse. The opening was wide enough to accommodate a horse and carriage. The building had two entrances. From the gate, the entrance on the right led to the counter area where the cashier sat and a large stairway. The entrance on the left led to the offices along Neue Mainzer Strasse. There was a large meeting room on the second floor and a safe in the basement. On the upper floors, there were several apartments, some of which were inhabited by the Metzlers while others were rented out. Technical modernizations started at the beginning of the 20th century. Shortly after 1900, the bank installed its first telephone and by World War I, it had already switched from gas-powered to electric lighting.

In the night bombing attacks on March 18, 1944, the neoclassical bank building and the majority of banking documents were destroyed by fire. Banking operations continued temporarily in space provided by an associated bank and in makeshift adjoining buildings in Grosse Gallusstrasse. The rubble was cleared in 1947, but reconstruction did not begin until banker Albert von Metzler (1898–1989) returned from Russian captivity in 1950. The new building, completed in 1954, was smaller than its neoclassical predecessor because some land had to be surrendered for the widening of Grosse Gallusstrasse and construction of Neue Schlesinger Gasse. For years, the bank was located on the ground floor while the Metzler family lived on the top floor and the rest of the space was rented out.

From 1985 to 1987, the building was extensively refurbished and modernized without interrupting business operations. At this time, the so-called 'bel étage' was set up on the second floor for receiving visitors. This area was very tastefully furnished with family portraits and antiques. About 30 years after this modernization, the building



Since October 2014, Metzler Bank headquarters has been in only its fifth location at Untermainanlage 1. © Metzler Bank, Frankfurt/Main, Historical Archive.

in Grosse Gallusstrasse no longer complied with modern building regulations and was once again in need of extensive renovations. Thus, after almost 200 years at this location, the senior management decided to give up the property at Grosse Gallusstrasse 18 and move to new premises. In September 2014, the last employees left the building. The entire property was sold in February 2015 to the US real estate company Tishman Speyer and by summer of 2015 the building had been completely demolished. A new mixed-use 185-meter high-rise is to be erected on the property by the end of 2018.

Since October 2015, the Metzler Bank's new headquarters has been located at Untermainanlage 1 and thus outside of the historical city center for the first time. This area was still undeveloped as late as the 19th century. In 1879, the Grunelius family, which operated a bank at Grosse Gallusstrasse 16, had a neoclassical villa built on this site by architect Heinrich Burnitz (1827–1880). This villa was destroyed in the bombings on March 22, 1944 and torn down thereafter. The city of Frankfurt erected a parking garage on this site in 1961. Metzler purchased the property in 1999, tore down the parking garage and erected

a modern nine-story office building with a stone façade. Until the bank's headquarters moved here in 2015, the building was completely rented out, and to this day, Metzler still rents out some of the office space to a law firm. The bank's visitors are received on the second floor where more than 340 years of company history meets the modern world. Here, modern furnishings are combined with antique pieces and ancestral portraits, and historical city paintings hang next to works of modern art. Even the blue sofa, a Metzler trademark from the entrance area at Grosse Gallusstrasse, has found a new home at Untermainanlage.

Not one of Metzler's former headquarters buildings is still standing today. In some cases, even the streets and addresses where they were located are no longer existent. This indicates the consistency of change affecting the cityscape. While it may often seem like the city is static and unchanging, in reality it completely transforms about every 30 years. Therefore, the history of Metzler's headquarter locations is a smaller-scale but accurate reflection of the city of Frankfurt's transformation from a medieval trade fair town into one of the most important financial centers in Europe. ●

Sal. Oppenheim Head Office in Cologne

Gabriele Teichmann

In June 1952, Waldemar von Oppenheim undertook a journey to New York. The personally liable partner of Sal. Oppenheim jr. & Cie., representing the fifth generation of Oppenheim bankers, not only sought to renew old business contacts. His chief aim was rather unusual for a banker: He studied the city's modern bank buildings as possible models for the new offices of his own bank that were in the process of being planned.

A new building was necessary because the old Sal. Oppenheim building at Grosse Budengasse in Cologne's centre had been destroyed during allied air raids of World War II. The site had been the home of the bank since 1808 when its founder Salomon Oppenheim jr. was able to purchase an impressive city mansion for everybody to see that its owner had arrived among the upper crust of Cologne society. By the turn of the century, however, the building had become too small for the ever-expanding business. Thus, in 1901 Salomon's grandsons Eduard and Albert von Oppenheim decided to tear down the old structure and rebuild on the site, which included an adjacent property. The plans were devised by Schreiterer & Below architects whom the Oppenheim bankers had probably met during the construction of the new Cologne synagogue in Roonstrasse, the planning of which lay in the hands of the same team. While both Oppenheims had converted to the Christian faith in the 1850s, they had kept in touch with Jewish life in their city and were found on the donors' list for the new synagogue.

In 1902, the bank moved into their new building at Grosse Budengasse 8-10. Its staff numbered about 60. For some time now it had included women who worked as typists or telephone operators, a development indicating technical progress as well



Grosse Budengasse 8 was purchased by Salomon Oppenheim jr. in 1808, ten years after he settled in Cologne.

as social change. A series of photographs taken in the early 1930s reminds us of the interior – dignified but in no way pompous, reflecting the pride and unassuming conservativeness of one of Germany's leading private banking houses.

The Nazi takeover of 1933 rang in twelve years of harassment and persecution for the Oppenheim family and bank due to their Jewish roots. However, with the loyal support of Robert Pferdmenges, personally liable partner since 1931, the bank was able to continue its operations under his name. In 1942 the building in Grosse Budengasse was hit by bombs so that all business was shifted to the private home of one of the partners. After this had

been heavily damaged, too, the few operations that remained were carried out from makeshift offices set up in the ruins of the Grosse Budengasse building.

At the beginning of March 1945, Cologne was conquered by American troops. For the Rhineland, the war was over. While a large part of the population reacted with a mixture of relief and fear, the allied conquest was greeted by all three partners of the bank – Robert Pferdmenges and the brothers Waldemar and Friedrich Carl von Oppenheim – with unconditional joy and a sense of liberation. They had all been persecuted by the Gestapo after the assassination attempt on Hitler in July 1944 and had spent the last months before

the downfall of the regime either in prison, in hiding or under house arrest.

Together, they tried to re-establish normality. Top priority was given to rebuilding business connections at home and abroad, and especially to helping German industry to get its feet again. The rebuilding of their bank's domicile could wait. Instead, the bankers rented interim offices in one of the few houses in the city centre, which had escaped destruction.

At the beginning of the 1950s, they felt that the time had come to put an end to this provisional arrangement. But they were having second thoughts on the location of the bank building. Surely Grosse Budengasse stood for tradition, but it was situated in the old town with its narrow medieval streets and provided little room for expansion. Moreover, the commercial hub of Cologne had shifted from the old town to the quarter around the central railway station after its opening in 1859. The new development focussed on the street Unter Sachsenhausen in the immediate vicinity of the station where many banks and insurance companies built splendid offices, turning the formally inconspicuous street with its humble houses into what locals soon nicknamed 'Cologne Wall Street'. The owners of Sal. Oppenheim decided that this would be the appropriate choice for their new start.

Soon, a suitable plot was found. The city of Cologne owned a large property, now in ruins, at Unter Sachsenhausen where the Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI) had had its seat. The imposing building had originally been erected as the head office of Schaaffhausen'scher Bankverein, created in 1848 as the first joint-stock bank in Germany with the assistance of the Oppenheim bankers. After the takeover of Schaaffhausen by Deutsche Bank in 1929, the building was sold to the city authorities to house its CCI. In November 1951, Sal. Oppenheim and the Cologne City Council signed a contract to swap premises. Oppenheim acquired half of the plot; the rest was allotted to a new thoroughfare cutting through the old layout of the city to ensure easier flow of traffic.

As their architect, the partners of the bank chose Fritz August Breuhaus de Groot. Born in 1883, he had joined the Deutsche Werkbund (German Association



The new Oppenheim building under construction. The remains of the previous offices in the foreground were later removed to make way for a new six-lane street. © Hausarchiv Bankhaus Sal. Oppenheim jr. & Cie., Cologne.



The postwar situation in rented interim quarters. © Hausarchiv Bankhaus Sal. Oppenheim jr. & Cie., Cologne.

of Craftsmen) around 1910. Inspired by the English Arts and Crafts Movement, the Werkbund aimed at integrating traditional crafts and industrial production in order to create quality products of high aesthetic value. The Werkbund movement was premised on the quest for a clean design based on function, foreshadowing an important aspect in the development of the Bauhaus school of design.

Breuhaus primarily planned private homes for the well-to-do in Germany and abroad. This is probably how he came to the attention of Waldemar von Oppenheim who, in 1948, commissioned him to build a villa in the park of his Schlenderhan estate as the family had decided to leave the 18th century manor house in favour of a more comfortable lifestyle. The cooperation must have been successful because



The entrance and service halls, 2005. © Hausarchiv Bankhaus Sal. Oppenheim jr. & Cie., Cologne.



Staircase and lift, 2005. © Hausarchiv Bankhaus Sal. Oppenheim jr. & Cie., Cologne.

Waldemar von Oppenheim recommended Breuhaus as the bank's architect, in spite of the fact that he had never designed an office block before. The banker followed the planning phase with great enthusiasm. Besides his reconnaissance trip to New York in 1952, he met up with Breuhaus regularly to discuss the emerging plans. The new building was going to be bright and transparent, with high-quality materials and a sense of understatement, underscoring the discrete style of a private banker. For Oppenheim, this meant more than just an architectural credo: He intended to make visible that Germany was leaving behind its dire past and trying to become an open, modern society.

In September 1952, construction works began after rubble had been cleared from the plot. Waldemar von Oppenheim, however, did not live to see the building finished. On December 12, 1952, he died of a heart attack at the age of 58. It seems that the trials and tribulations of the Nazi period had been too much for him. When the bank's partners and staff moved into their new offices in October 1953, it proceeded quietly without the usual celebrations.

The new Sal. Oppenheim building, a five-storey block, displayed a rather unobtrusive limestone façade void of any décor. On entering the building, one was welcome by a foyer receiving daylight through

large, etched-glass windows and the adjacent service hall, both clad in warm beige and red stone. The most remarkable features of the entrance were a spiralling staircase accentuated by bands of light, and a glass lift. As a contrast, the strong-room in the basement reflected the bank's history. The clients' safes and the heavy doors manufactured in 1901 by S. J. Arnheim, locksmith to His Imperial and Royal Majesty in Berlin, had been carefully dug out from the ruins of Grosse Budengasse and transferred to the new premises.

A novelty much commented on was the garage on the fifth floor providing room for 26 vehicles. It was accessible from the rear of the building by a specially designed car lift. Due to the rapid expansion of car ownership, however, the garage quickly proved too small and was replaced by offices. There was a staff restaurant on the fourth floor, one amongst the social amenities of the bank. Another feature worth mentioning was the pneumatic delivery system which guaranteed quick internal exchange of documents.

For many decades, the decoration of the representative rooms consisted mainly of family portraits and old masters. In the 1990s, the bank followed a trend set by other enterprises and started its own collection of contemporary art. The decision was triggered by opening an

additional building behind the traditional offices. It also reflected the Oppenheim family's long-standing commitment to art collection and art patronage. The old 1950s building was included into the collection concept that combines painting, graphic design and sculpture. Stylistically, modern classics with painters such as Pablo Picasso and Henri Matisse are to be found next to Informal Art epitomised by Hann Trier and Emil Schumacher, or Pop Art with artists like Andy Warhol and Roy Lichtenstein. Other notable artists represented in the collection are Sigmar Polke, Gerhard Richter, Christo, Hans Arp, and Eduardo Chillida. Many of the meeting rooms are decorated with the works of a single artist and named after him. However, the works of art are not only on display in the more formal rooms but also in staff offices and corridors. The underlying message is that art is not just for the select few or for museums but part of everyday life.

While the offices had to go with the times and underwent regular modernisation, the entrance and the service halls still genuinely reflect the architectural spirit of the 1950s so typical of Cologne. As a matter of course, the Sal. Oppenheim building was listed in 1992. During the Cologne Day of the Open Monument, the bank is proud to offer guided public tours to its premises and its art collection. ●

Banks in Leipzig

Dirk Schaal

Bank buildings and their architecture leave their mark in the city skylines. In some European cities this architectural heritage tells us a fascinating story about the evolution of the modern banking system and its architecture. For example in Leipzig: a thousand year old city of trade in the middle of Germany. Elaborate restored monuments reflect the history of banking at this location. Bank architecture of all styles and functions can be explored: baroque banking and trading houses, private banks of the early 19th century, representative state-owned banks and universal banks of the late 19th century, bank buildings in reform architecture from the early 20th century or in modern and contemporary architecture. Using 38 examples of Leipzig bank buildings the historians Ulrike Zimmerl and Andreas Graul describe the development of modern banking, its architecture and visual language, as well the history of these banks and their bankers. The well designed book with high-quality photographs invites readers to visit Leipzig and its banking history. The book assists the reader in discovering and decrypting the secret messages of bank architecture. ●



Handelsbörse The stock exchange, built 1679–87 by Georg Starcke, was the 1st fixed location for trade and fair business in Leipzig. © PUNCTUM / Peter Franke.



Reichsbank Hauptstelle Leipzig. Built 1886–87 by Max Hasak for the central bank of Germany, founded in 1876 shortly after the establishment of the German Empire in 1871. Example of historical Wilhelminian architecture. business in Leipzig. © PUNCTUM / Peter Franke.



Deutsche Bank, entrance safe. Built 1898–1902 by Arwed Rossbach for the Leipziger Bank. Immediately after the collapse in 1901 the Deutsche Bank took over the Leipziger Bank. © PUNCTUM / Peter Franke.

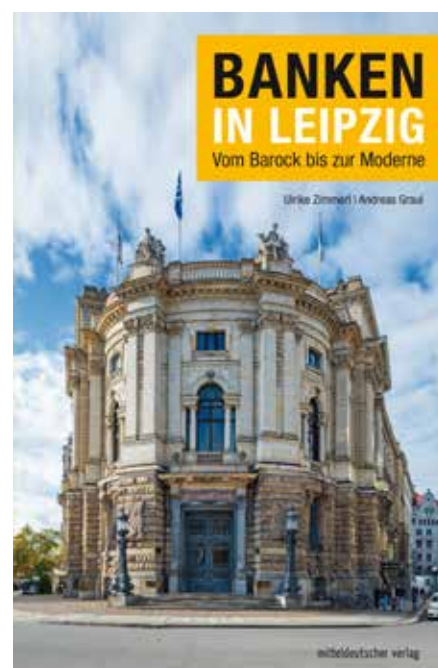


Dresdner Bank, banking hall. Built 1910–11 by Martin Dülfer for the Dresdner Bank branch in Leipzig. © PUNCTUM / Peter Franke.



Kroch Jr. KGaA. Leipzig's first skyscraper built 1926–1928 by German Bestelmeyer for the private bank Kroch. © PUNCTUM / Peter Franke.

*Ulrike Zimmerl/Andreas Graul:
Banken in Leipzig. Vom Barock
bis zur Moderne. Halle (Saale):
Mitteldeutscher Verlag, 2015.*



The main building of the Magyar Nemzeti Bank

The new building

Towards the end of the 19th century, the area of today's Szabadság square was occupied by a single colossal edifice called Neugebäude (New Building), designed by Isidore Marcello Canevale in 1786 during the reign of Emperor Joseph II. The building functioned as a prison during the Franco-Prussian War, was later used as a prison, and after the defeat of the 1848-1849 War of Independence it became a prison for Hungarian patriots, and many were executed here. Among these martyrs to the cause of liberty was Count Lajos Batthyány, prime minister of Hungary's first independent government. In 1851 Lajos Kossuth, Mihály Táncsics, Dániel Irányi and their associates who had escaped the reprisals by fleeing abroad were all hung in effigy in this building. Thus, understandably, the square that stood free after the Neugebäude was torn down was named 'Szabadság' (Liberty) and the streets leading into it were named after the martyrs and heroes of the War of Independence.

By the end of the 19th century, the building had become a symbol of detested foreign oppression, like the Bastille in Paris. Following the Compromise, the New Building was to serve as a printing press, then an orphanage, but it was eventually demolished in 1897. In the course of the 19th century, the city became so densely built-up that in the period following the Compromise, the neighbourhood of the infamous Neugebäude was considered as part of the city centre, and eventually it had to be demolished. Its place made way for a completely new quarter.

The building site was divided into 28 plots and offered for sale with a thirty-year tax concession. The buyers included the Austro-Hungarian Bank, which had no headquarters in Budapest, and the Hungarian Royal Postal Savings Association. The subsequently demolished headquarters of the Budapest branch of the Austro-Hungarian Bank on József nádor square was unsuited for the purposes of a central bank, and so a decision was adopted to erect a new building. Szabadság square, a central area



Facade from Szabadság square © Magyar Nemzeti Bank.

earmarked for development but still undeveloped, proved to be an excellent site.

The tender

The Austro-Hungarian Bank invited tenders for planning the Bank's Budapest headquarters in the summer of 1900. In strict observance of the dualist system, eight Hungarian and eight Austrian architects were invited to submit a tender. The Hungarians included Ignác Alpár, Lipót Baumhorn, Flóris Korb, József Hubert, Albert Körössi, Ödön Lechner, Artúr Meinigg and Ernő Schannen, with the Austrians represented by Fellner and Helmer, Franz Freiherr von Krauss, Karl König, Friedrich Schachner, Ludwig Richter, Ludwig Baumann and Otto Wagner. The panel of judges consisted of two Austrian architects (Christian Ulrich and Emil Förster) and two Hungarian architects (Győző Czigler and István Pucher) and government and bank dignitaries. According to the decision made in May 1901, the judges unanimously awarded the first prize to Ignác Alpár. The press and Hungarian architects celebrated the result

as a national triumph over Austrian architecture. In Austria, the professionals were surprised by the Hungarian success, as they had been certain of an Austrian victory.

The little that was published in the Austrian press about the event, it was, nevertheless, fair: it was generally conceded that Ignác Alpár deserved the award¹. Another building, namely the Stock Exchange, was already under construction at this time under Alpár's plans in Szabadság square, and it is very likely that the judges were influenced by the need to maintain the stylistic unity of the two dominant buildings in the square.

Unfortunately, the plans submitted in the competition have been lost. The only one we have knowledge of from the magazine 'Hungarian Design Contests' is the one made by Ignác Alpár. As far as the other plans

¹ All participants of the tender were financially rewarded. The winner was awarded 5,000, the runner-up 3,000, the third placed tenderer 2,000 and the other tenderers received 1,500 crowns. The crown was a strong currency at the time; the amount of the first prize was equivalent to 2-3 years' annual income of a very well earning, high ranking public servant.



Lamfalussy Board Room © Magyar Nemzeti Bank.

are concerned, we can only make speculations based on contemporary publications.

Construction of the Budapest headquarters of the Austro-Hungarian Bank started in the spring of 1902, and was completed within three years, in the spring of 1905. It was a monumental structure with a palatial facade, with columns 12 metres high and 1.5 metres in diameter, spanning two stories, finished at a cost of 4.5 million crowns compared to the projected cost of 3 million.

The designer

Ignác Alpár (1855, Pest – 1928, Zurich) was a great Hungarian master of the late eclectic-style architecture. He was born in 1855 under the name of Ignác Schöckl into a craftsman's family in Pest. He did not fare well in school and after the fifth grade he was sent to serve as an apprentice to a stone mason. He started to work under the guidance of Alajos Hauszmann in 1873, then transferred to an academy in Berlin (Schinkel Bauakademie) to continue his studies. In his first year there, he already participated in academic contests and won several first prizes.

In 1877 he was named librarian of the Hungarian Society of Berlin, created for Hungarian students, then was elected secretary and finally chairman. In 1880 he was awarded the Schinkel Medal of the Association of

Berlin Architects. He returned to Budapest in 1881 upon the invitation of Hauszmann and spent seven years working with Steindl and Hauszmann as an assistant lecturer. Then he decided to go independent and opened up his own office. The six years he spent in the German capital significantly affected his style for a lifetime. Contemporaries and critics spoke of him as 'a difficult person', full of contradictions, but his works leave no doubt as to his talent. Instead of the grace of neo-Renaissance, Alpár's architecture is characterised by monumental feats of late historicism, an amalgam of Greco-Roman and ancient Eastern stylistic elements. Speaking in 1916 to the Austrian Association of Professional Engineers and Architects, Alpár summed up his artistic credo as follows: 'Sound technology, i.e. fine craftsmanship; conscientious management, i.e. strict accounting; and fitting the building to its environment, to the townscape, in as monumental a form as possible.'

In addition to the central bank building, Ignác Alpár designed several other financial institutions; for example, he started the design of the building of the Hungarian Commercial Bank of Pest on Franz Josef square (today Roosevelt square, housing the Ministry of Interior). Zsigmond Quittner continued the work on the plans and Alpár was again in charge from the second phase. Other works

of Alpár include the Hungarian General Credit Bank (currently Ministry of Finance) located on József nádor square; the First National Savings Association of Pest (headquarters of the Budapest Stock Exchange until 2007), on the corner of Váci street and Deák Ferenc street; and the Budapest Stock and Commodity Exchange on the other side of Szabadság square (housing the Hungarian Television until July 2009). Alpár designed a historical complex called Vajdahunyad Castle in Városliget (City Park) for exhibitions and special events on the occasion of the millennium of the Hungarian State in 1896, which has been the home of the Museum of Agriculture for some years. Alpár was a prolific architect; in addition to the financial institutions, he designed over thirty primary and secondary schools, a university and several churches. He designed a total of approximately 120-130 buildings (the exact figure is not known) spread throughout the country.

The external decoration of the building

Alpár designed the facade to exude an aura of strength and serenity. The building's two main facades (one facing Bank street, the other Szabadság square) are asymmetrical. The one facing Szabadság square is more ornate, as it was designed to complement the Stock Exchange on the other side of the square.

The building is illustrated by the reliefs of sculptor Károly Sennyey, starting at the corner of Kiss Ernő street and Szabadság square, with the following scenes: smelting the ore and casting bars of precious metal; coining money; printing paper money; designing and stamping paper money; arts, science and silversmithing; animal husbandry, agriculture and industry; Phoenician, Egyptian, Arab and Jewish trade; medieval banking; and mining for ore. The keystones of windows on the first floor symbolise different nations, alluding to the international nature of banking. The two stone figures on the balcony above the main entrance are the work of István Tóth; the statues on the parapet of the Bank street and Hold street corner is the work of József Róna; while the statue on the parapet facing Szabadság square is the work of Béla Markup. The facades overlooking Hold street and Kiss Ernő street are considerably more modest. The latter is the shortest street in Budapest. ●



Windows of Miksa Róth © Magyar Nemzeti Bank.



First floor hall and staircase © Magyar Nemzeti Bank.

Staircases

Upon entering the building, we are in a grand, spacious foyer that offers a view of the bank's impressive, grand internal staircases.

Opposite the main entrance is a stately and majestic three-flight staircase leading to the third floor. With passages on both sides, these staircases and the foyers built on each floor lend the building an unmistakable ambience and architectural rhythm. The baroque winding of the main staircase's railing is a distinct feature of the building, decorated with wheat bales which uniquely symbolise the prosperity of the Hungarian economy. The two quarter-turn stairs flanking the main staircase end on the first floor in a spacious hall with stairs leading to the third-floor neo-Renaissance conference hall. Originally, this was the second floor until the beginning of the 1950s, when the building saw its largest reconstruction with a new floor being added in between the first and second one without altering the external appearance of the building. This is how the Bank was turned into a four-floor edifice.

The internal decoration of the building

As visitors move upstairs on any of the stairs, they can admire the original windows of Miksa Róth. With coloured windows and woodwork, the main staircase has the most ornate

courtyard facade in the building. Items of Art Nouveau architectural decoration are credited to Géza Maróti, while richly carved doors and door frames are the work of Alajos Michl.

Each floor has a characteristic ornamental motif of its own: the ground floor is decorated with wheat sheaves, the first floor with fleur-de-lis and thistles, while the third-floor support stones, stair handles, stuccoes, door carvings and lamp-posts display horse-chestnuts. The secession-style plant and flower-patterned mosaic tiles in the foyers and passages on the ground and upper floors were made by József Walla of Törökbalint. The wrought-iron rails were designed by Ede Alpár and the wheat-motif light fixtures are the work of Rudolf Kiszling.

Original plan of operation

In addition to interior architectural details, Alpár laid emphasis on meeting advanced functional requirements. He explained this as follows: 'When I started drafting the plans, I soon realised that the task I undertook differed from the buildings that transacted ordinary banking business. A special-purpose building was required that had not been built ever before ... So I adopted my governing principle that an architect can design a special-purpose building only if he is absolutely and completely aware of the operation for which the building is to be built.' Unlike other banks of the time, in the central bank Alpár decided not to include a main customer hall. In modern terms we could say he adopted a 'private banking' approach: administration was envisaged in small, even visually isolated offices on the first floor. In keeping with bank security requirements, he designed a cortile for cash delivery vehicles. This cortile had a 10-12 vehicle capacity. Customers were served through the main entrance from Bank street, while delivery wagons entered the cortile from Szabadság square, through a completely separated entrance.

In the original building bank transactions were handled on the first floor, while the second (currently third) floor housed offices and living quarters for the management, and the boardroom, and the third (currently fourth) floor accommodated staff quarters. A two-floor establishment was erected in the vacant cortile during the reconstruction of 1949-1950. Its second floor functioned as a teller hall providing commercial banking services. After the Bank's portfolio had been

redefined, the teller hall lost its function and it was converted into the Visitors' Centre, offering comprehensive information services to the general public.

Board-rooms

The most significant events take place on the third floor where the boardrooms are located, along with the offices of the governor and the deputy governors.

The Lámfalussy Board room

The Lámfalussy Board room is an ornate neo-Renaissance hall. This is the meeting place of the Monetary Council. Emil Schrödl designed the interior which has remained in its original form ever since.

Upon entering, the gold-plated stuccoes of the ceiling immediately catch the eye. The stuccoes reflect the spirit and formal elements of neo-Gothic England, while the marble pillars enrich the area with neo-Renaissance details.

In addition to paintings and small sculptures, the atmosphere of the room is further heightened by Venetian mirrors, oak-wood wall coverings and original chandeliers. After one hundred years the appearance of the room remains unchanged; the bars of the former ventilating system can still be seen where the walls meet the ceiling. The chairs and armchairs were made after the fashion of the original furniture.

The Popovics Board Room

The smaller boardroom of the Bank used to accommodate board meetings. It contains less decorative elements than the 'Lámfalussy' Board room, but the carved wall coverings, ornamental chandeliers and gypsum stuccoes lend elegance to it. The furniture fits the style of the room perfectly. Portraits depict Sándor Popovics and Lipót Baranyai, two former governors of the bank. The main building of the MNB has been listed as a historic monument since 1976.

József Antall Conference Centre

The newest part of the MNB building is the József Antall Conference Centre, completed in the summer of 2006. The Conference Centre consists of two parts: the upper floor hall accommodates a smaller number of participants, while the large hall is suitable for conferences with up to 100 participants. Contemporary works of art harmonise with the modern interior. ●

1893. A new home for the central bank. The Bank of Italy's head office in Via Nazionale

Marco Pagliara

After the unification of Italy, Rome became the last European capital to undergo the major urban transformations of the nineteenth century ushered in by the industrial revolution and the birth of a new political order within the European states. Buildings began to spring up to the north-east of the capital after the construction of Termini railway station, which opened in 1863 and was enlarged barely a decade later in 1874.

New urban districts gradually overran the huge private parklands spread across the high ground to the east of the capital, where winding paths and tree-lined avenues once opened onto delightful views of the scenery around Diocletian's Baths and the bell towers of the Basilica of St Mary Major rising above the surrounding gardens. Among these were Villa Montalto, once owned by Cardinal Felice Peretti (later Pope Sixtus V) and now replaced by Termini station and the Esquiline neighbourhood, and Villa Patrizi, now the Opera House.

These vast estates, which until shortly before had been in the hands of a few very wealthy aristocratic families, were split up and sold in lots for the construction of symmetrically laid-out residential areas in the style of Paris. The new apartment blocks were designed to accommodate the legions of senior civil servants, for the most part recruited among the middle classes as in the other European capitals, and destined to fill various roles in the new government of the Kingdom of Italy.

The architects and engineers designing the buildings to house the administration of the newly unified State had to decide what type of construction and what architectural language would best convey the ideals of the young nation and meet the functional requirements of the new capital. The Rome of the former pontifical government offered



Air view of the Palazzo Koch area © Bank of Italy.

virtually no examples of buildings designed for specific purposes, only the occasional construction that had been put to different uses, such as Palazzo Montecitorio which had once housed the papal law courts (*curia apostolica*) and was transformed into the seat of the Italian Parliament. So, even for the new institutional buildings the architectural point of reference remained the late Renaissance palazzo of the Roman aristocracy.

The previous generation of architects had taken the sixteenth-century palazzo as inspiration for some of their greatest achievements. Andrea Busiri Vici (1818-1911) belonged to that generation, and both his works on architectural theory and his projects shaped the tastes of the Roman aristocracy of the time. The ideals of classical Rome had always inspired the city's art, witness the various 'schools' that sprang up between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries; a

large selection of their work is preserved in the museum of prints and drawings in Rome (Istituto centrale per la grafica). It was in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, when the originality of Roman culture with respect to Greek had been reassessed with the publication of *Antichita Romanae* by the architect G.B. Piranesi (1720-1778), that the models of classical Rome fused with a more 'romantic' and nostalgic vision of ancient architecture that sought to retrieve the roots of Italian identity.

Interest in Roman antiquities continued to animate the art academies and influence the collective imagination of the most cultured members of the new Roman bourgeoisie and of the aristocracy, becoming a 'cultural requirement' of contemporary sensibility and taste. Enthusiasm for ancient history, spurred by the resumption of widespread archaeological excavations, was the

only cultural point of reference around which the new State could, in symbolic terms, forge its identity. It encompassed equally the last descendants of ancient aristocratic families and the new middle classes, both of which could feel themselves to be adequately represented by the common roots of classical Rome.

In this artistic and cultural milieu, Gaetano Koch graduated in architecture from the Accademia di San Luca in 1872. Just ten years later, in 1882, he was invited, in competition with the well-established architects Pio Piacentini and Francesco Azzurri, to submit plans for the Bank of Italy's head office to be erected on the last section of Via Nazionale. Piacentini and Azzurri had already experimented with innovative forms and languages in their residential projects, driving forwards the architecture of the period through the adaption of elements of late Renaissance style to new buildings, as in the designs for the Esquilina, the first district of Rome as capital city.

Most of Gaetano Koch's private commissions, like those of other architects working in Rome at the time, came from the middle class and business milieu whose members were gradually assuming the management of the new State. Other work came from the old aristocratic families which, having sold off their suburban estates, withdrew to their vast Renaissance palaces in the city centre, in the area now occupied by Corso Vittorio Emanuele II and Via del Corso. Perhaps it was the historical roots of these great Roman dynasties that Koch wished to symbolise with the ships' prows in travertine stone set in the façade of the Bank of Italy's building. The reference, taken from the architecture of the Roman forum, would seem to allude to the aristocracy's leading role in the events of the nascent Italian economy.

So, as the new Kingdom of Italy began to incorporate the various issuing institutes into a single body capable of performing the role of central bank, a competition was launched to design the headquarters. Banca Nazionale nel Regno d'Italia, as it was known at the time, had moved its headquarters to Rome in 1870 after the capture of the city and was housed in rented offices close to Largo Argentina. After ten years, however, it became necessary to find a suitably impressive home that would convey the idea of the bank's solidity.



Air view of the Palazzo Koch area © Bank of Italy.

Given the many functions performed by the bank and the need to provide offices for its local branch, the size of the new building was an important factor. Thus a plot of some 10,000 square metres, at the back of Villa Aldobrandini, was chosen, occupying some 120 metres along the last section of Via Nazionale, which had not yet been completed. On 19 April 1882 the Board of Directors of Banca Nazionale nel Regno d'Italia approved a proposal to draw up the specifications for a suitable building in which to carry out its new functions. The project plan was drawn up by the bank's Director General, Giacomo Grillo (1830-1895). It covered both the head office premises and those of the local Rome branch, with details of the arrangement of the various floors and the bank's requirements. It would be assigned to one of three well-known architects for a fee of 5,000 lire. In the plan the building would be erected on Via Nazionale, at a distance from all the sides of the plot (a trapezium) for reasons of security. In addition to the local Rome branch of the bank and the head offices it was to contain apartments for the two directors, more modest accommodation for guards, porters and other bank staff, and finally there was to be space for the banknote printing facilities. The building, therefore, was to serve three purposes: bank, residential accommodation and industrial printing works. Each was to have its own separate entrance, although the apartments of the two directors (the

Director General of the bank and the Director of the Rome branch) needed to communicate with their offices.

The project plan contained a description of the interior, floor by floor starting from the basement, and called for health and hygiene standards and lighting requirements to be observed even in the store-rooms and strong rooms. All the offices of the Rome branch were to be located on the ground floor, including the banknote printing works. The various procurement offices were to communicate with the head office located on the upper floors, close to the room designated for the annual meeting of shareholders,¹ which would have seating for 500 people and good acoustics.

The plan also dictated the style of the building, which was to be monumental but plain, the rooms decorated according to their importance. The roof had to be accessible, with metal structures. The basement and ground floor areas would have vaulted ceilings, while the other floors would have flat or curved plaster ceilings. The shutters were to be of metal not wood and slide back into the walls, the wall cladding would be in travertine stone and the flooring in stone or marble. Heating would be supplied by

¹ This is the Shareholders' Room where the Bank of Italy still holds its annual general meeting at the end of May of every year. On this occasion the Governor reads his Concluding Remarks to the Annual Report on the bank's activities during the year, which include supervision of the banking and financial system, oversight of the payment system and money supply, and an analysis of economic developments.

radiators. The building should preferably be of brick with foundations consisting of tufa blocks on a layer of cement. Lastly, the tender specifications stated that the plans should be accompanied not only by drawings but also by a report with a complete breakdown of costs.

On 1st May 1882 the architects Gaetano Koch, Pio Piacentini and Francesco Azzurri were invited to submit tenders. These would be evaluated by Camillo Boito (1836-1914), one of the best known names in Italian architecture at the time. To begin, Gaetano Koch visited the bank's offices in Florence, Bologna and Milan, where he and Pio Piacentini also went to see the head office of the Cassa di Risparmio delle Provincie Lombarde. On 30th September the two architects submitted their plans for the Palazzo della Banca Nazionale nel Regno d'Italia, but Francesco Azzurri did not present one and was therefore excluded.

From this preliminary stage all that remains of Gaetano Koch's proposal is a report indicating that the building would be free-standing with open space on four sides and an entrance on Via Nazionale leading into a main courtyard. All the offices of the bank's Rome branch on the ground floor overlooked this courtyard, but there was no mention of the prospective location of the banking hall. The courtyard of the bank-note printing works was accessed from Via del Mazzarino. The offices of the senior management and the rooms for the shareholders' meeting and the meetings of the Board of Directors were on the first floor. The style of the building was late Renaissance, with the main façade featuring two architectural orders. A road at the back, running parallel to Via Nazionale and within the area of the plot, would give the building symmetry and make it similar in volume to Palazzo Farnese.

Boito did not like the plan: the bank-note printing works should not be sited within the main building, some offices were badly located, others had insufficient light, and the shareholders' room was too long for the acoustics to be satisfactory. Lastly, he thought the façade on Via Nazionale was unsuitable for a public building and even very ordinary. Gaetano Koch rejected the latter criticism and stoutly defended his design for the façade. He maintained that the monumental proportions of the building set it above any private palazzo because

the plain style demanded in the specifications was combined with majestic proportions, the building being 32 metres in height overall with 10 metres between each floor. More serious objections, both functional and of spatial arrangement, were raised against Piacentini's project and his extremely imposing main façade was out of balance with respect to the other sides.

In the second stage of the tender the building designed by Koch, the one eventually constructed, had two square, symmetrical courtyards of equal size: one was the Ceremonial Courtyard and the other, which was roofed, housed the Banking Hall for clients of the Rome branch, with offices on the ground floor. In this way the architect solved the problem of the two roles of the building, in which the institutional functions of a bank serving the national interest had to be carried out alongside the commercial activities of a bank that dealt at the time with private investors. He did so by updating the model of the two-peristyle house described by Vitruvius in *De Architettura*, and applied in the *Domus Octaviani* and *Domus Augustana* on the Palatine Hill, where the emperor had conducted both public and private functions.

In the central body of the building separating the two courtyards was the Grand Staircase, preceded by a square antechamber from which a long corridor linked the main front and rear wings. The façade on Via Nazionale was set back below road level to let air and light reach the basement areas from the resulting gap; at the same time a central section extended 8 metres forwards across the gap, improving the appearance of the façade from Via Nazionale.

At this stage Boito favoured Koch's design for its distribution of space and its functional qualities, whereas Piacentini's project was defective in terms of interior arrangement although his grandiose façade was preferred, being in the fifteenth-century Florentine style of Palazzo Strozzi as opposed to the late sixteenth-century style adopted by Koch. In view of the special functions of the bank, the priorities in the choice of project were functionality and good spatial distribution. However, the aesthetics of the façade were also important as this would project the image of the first national bank in the capital of Italy. Thus the choice between the two projects was not made immediately and in June 1884, after a year's hesitation,

the Board of Directors asked the two architects to take on the project jointly, combining their two designs: the layout of one and the façade of the other.

Piacentini tried to adapt Koch's project to accommodate his façade, completely overturning the design presented by Koch, who refused to be part of such an imbroglio. At this point the bank acknowledged that Koch's project was better in terms of spatial distribution and in March 1895 commissioned him to draw up the plans, with some alterations to the façade, and oversee the work.

In the event, not only was Koch's spatial distribution maintained but also his façade, although the central projecting section was much reduced and two symmetrical main entrances were set on Via Nazionale, leading through to similarly arranged spaces. Inside the entrances are two lofty vaulted vestibules. Beyond one of them is the Ceremonial Courtyard porticoed on two sides, reached by a second vestibule with three cross vaults (in line with the triple arches of the entrance on Via Nazionale) offering a view through to the statue of Antinoo² against the back wall. The vestibule of the second triple-arched entrance abuts on a corridor running lengthwise between the Grand Staircase and the Banking Hall, which occupies the second courtyard area, here roofed with a partially vaulted coffered ceiling with lunettes.

The Grand Staircase has an open well and a semi-circular vault projecting 3.2 metres from the cornice. It occupies the centre of the building between the two courtyards and can be reached from both, although the main access is through the portico of the Ceremonial Courtyard into the Room of the She-Wolf. The Banking Hall, or public room, is double height with wide arches along the walls resting on imposts of a minor Tuscan order and separated by Corinthian pilaster strips, creating a repetitive design that marks out the various functions of the room while drawing everything together. Natural light comes from a series of small windows similar to those in Roman baths, set in the lunettes surrounding the vaulted ceiling.

The building is some 30 metres high on Via Nazionale with two floors below ground level and two floors above, while along the side roads and at the back, where the land slopes down, the building has five floors,

² Discovered during excavations for the foundations of the building.



Entrance hall © Bank of Italy.

with one mezzanine at ground floor level and one on the first floor. The building's functionality stems in part from the use of the slope in the land towards the rear of the plot on Via Panisperna to create additional floors above ground level at the back, linked to the front wing on Via Nazionale. A passageway 5 metres deep and 8 metres wide separates the two buildings and allows light and air to reach the two floors below ground level.

The façade on Via Nazionale has three horizontal bands which define the overall composition and three main vertical sections, the central one projecting forwards. At ground floor level the band of rusticated blocks of travertine stone runs right around the building, giving unity to the design. The forward section in the centre of the façade is itself divided into three vertical sections and contains the two sets of arched entrances opening in the lower band of rusticated stone. Above and between these entrances jut sculptures in travertine of the prows of Roman warships, the rostra that adorned the raised platforms used by orators, giving the name 'rostrum', several of which had been excavated in the Roman forum at that time; they contain a symbolic reference to Octavian.

The inclusion of such good omens above the entrance to a reception area was a tradition of ancient Rome, described by Cicero in the *Philippicae*, and it alludes to Octavian's capture of Egyptian warships at the Battle of Actium in 31 bc (later put on display in the Roman forum) and the positive effect this had on the future of Rome, which was able to enact the first monetary reform and launch the economy of the empire.

A wide cornice in the classical architectural style of Antonio da Sangallo the Younger encircles the building, marking off the attic. Above it, close to the entrances on Via Nazionale, were once two groups of sculptures by Cantalamessa Papotti depicting allegories of economics and law; they were removed in the 1930s. Above the ground floor, in the central part of the façade, are two superimposed classical orders (Ionic and Corinthian) consisting of half columns and corner pilasters; the balcony windows are framed by columns and lintel, with segmental arch tympana on the first floor and triangular pediments on the second. The Ceremonial Courtyard features three architectural orders (Tuscan, Ionic and Corinthian), with pilasters adorning the piers of the portico on the ground floor and

separating the windows on the upper floors. The construction of such a magnificent building was a novelty for Rome at the time. There were no other examples of bank architecture except for the banking halls created inside the courtyards of the palaces of the aristocracy, which differed from other styles of architecture owing to the presence of vast expanses of glass and metal roofing. This instance of special purpose architecture inspired by the style of the late sixteenth century brought a fresh approach to the functional and spatial arrangement of the typical Roman palazzo. It adapted the structure and distribution of space to the various requirements dictated by the new tasks and representative role of the institution.

When he designed the building for the Bank of Italy at the end of the nineteenth century, Koch achieved, at a very specific historical moment, a superb synthesis of form and function. His design not only evoked the roots of the identity of the newly unified State but showed the next generation of architects of the 'Roman School' (which included Marcello Piacentini) how the revival of ancient architecture could lead the transition towards the style of the Italian 'Novecento'. ●

The historical premises of the Opere Pie di San Paolo in Turin

Erika Salassa

In the pages of the Turin-based daily *La Gazzetta del Popolo* della Domenica of October 26, 1902 an in-depth feature described the new premises of the Istituto delle Opere Pie di San Paolo. A few days earlier the building had been inaugurated in the presence of king Victor Emmanuel III, princess Letizia Bonaparte and Emmanuel Philibert duke of Aosta after undergoing a comprehensive renovation on a project by Giuseppe Pastore. 'Not delusions of grandeur nor an unrestrained desire for elegance and splendor, but a genuine need for larger spaces and a better organization of the many services provided, sanitary considerations as well as a remarkable sense of decency': these were the motivations that emerged from the article to explain the decision to undertake such an architectural feat at the turn of the century. Other interventions had been carried out in the past, as the Institute's ownership extended to larger portions of the block's property, until it came to own it in its entirety by 1930 with the goal of providing larger and more functional premises to the Monte di Pietà (pawnshop). One example was the construction of an auction room, that was built after the demolition of a number of low-rise constructions and that would later be dismantled to build the main hall. The main facade of the new building was characterized by a severe and elegant appearance. It featured three separate entrances: one for the employees, one for the Monte di Pietà, and the central one for the public that entered across a wide concourse and a peristyle with marble columns from Verona leading to the vast main hall. Each arc corresponded to a window with a teller. Looking up, an elegant balcony ran around the upper portion of the hall and the ceiling was made of glass. The flooring consisted of glass square tiles,



Auction room of the Monte di Pietà before the renovation, late 19th century. © Archivio Storico della Compagnia di San Paolo.



Ground floor hall, home to lending and treasury activities, early 20th century. © Archivio Storico della Compagnia di San Paolo.

Paolo Gaidano, 'Come dressed in purity to receive your dowry', fresco, 1909. © Archivio Storico della Compagnia di San Paolo.

through which the light reached the rooms below the ground, that housed the safety deposit boxes. These offered booths for customers, strongrooms containing 2550 smaller boxes and larger safes. The armor-plating consisted of a shield of 'sheets of unpierceable steel from the Flocart steel mill in West-falia'. The doors were fitted with safety locks with timed combinations. The upper floor was home to the administration and president's offices, while the attic housed the archives, the registry and the general supplies offices.

The renovation works continued in the council's meeting room, designed by the architect Carlo Ceppi, who recommended the painter Paolo Gaidano for the execution of the frescoes and the decorative friezes on the walls and the ceiling. The painting cycle was completed in 1909: the themes of the compositions depicted the Institute's historical activity, from the origins of the 16th-century brotherhood to the 20th-century lending institution. A set of allegories in the upper frieze illustrated the various social and charitable work in which the Institute engaged, from providing a dowry to poor girls to commercial, industrial and agricultural property credit; from pledges and loans to the education of the needy; from assistance to the 'shamefaced' to charity to the derelicts.

The premises of the Institute, which have remained in the district historically known as Saint Felix (San Felice) since the 18th century, in the old center of Turin, have continued to characterize the city. To this day, the street where the building is located is known as via Monte di Pietà. ●



Safe deposit box room, early 20th century. © Archivio Storico della Compagnia di San Paolo.



Auction room of the Monte di Pietà, before the renovation, interior, late 19th century. © Archivio Storico della Compagnia di San Paolo.

Generali's real estate between the end of the XIX century and the Great War

The historical headquarters

Silvia Stenner

‘... thus I required – I say – that Generali choose the most prominent lots in our major cities with the aim of building headquarters for the Company, to be duly decorated with the emblem of our beloved Lion¹’: this was, in brief, President Marco Besso’s² real estate policy. Indeed, over the years Generali attentively managed to purchase or build its own headquarters in its main European and extra-European cities, identifying to this aim the most attractive or strategic locations. The buildings would serve not only as business or representative venues but also and foremost as investments, contributing at the same time to the modernization, the development or simply the embellishment of several urban areas. The first real proprietary activities date back to the years soon after the Company’s foundation and consisted in the operation of life annuities and the granting of mortgage loans. Among the most ancient transactions recorded in the Company’s papers is the raising of a mortgage in the amount of five thousand Florins for a building located in Trieste, in 1834³. Afterwards, several buildings and land acquisitions in the major places of business on the Italian peninsula and abroad would follow⁴. In order to investigate the Company’s real estate operations, reference has to be made primarily to the papers of the Top Management meetings, which are a complete archival series (as from 1831) housed at the Company’s Historical Archive⁵. As a matter of fact, in accordance with the Company’s articles of association this collective body possessed both the technical competence and the decisional power to deal with these matters, subject to the approval of the Board of Directors⁶. The minutes, compared with the annual management reports⁷, not only allow for the reconstruction of the Company’s real estate policy, but they also contain accurate progress reports on buildings’ construction



Fig 1. Assicurazioni Generali's building, Geiringer's building, piazza Duchi degli Abruzzi, Trieste [1925-1928], headquarter of the Company's Head Office. ©Archivio Storico Assicurazioni Generali, Versamenti, scheda 27520.

works, as well as a wealth of information on how critical obstacles were overcome and the various situations successfully managed as a whole.

Each property investment would be evaluated on the basis of two basic requirements: first, its financial profitability over time⁸ and second, its adequacy in fulfilling the Company’s commercial needs and return on image (or rather ‘réclame’ as noted in the minutes). The latter was an acutely felt need whenever the extent of the Company’s business grew to such an extent so as to call for space expansion for employees and their offices. Quite often, the most proper locations would be suggested by local agents themselves, as they were thoroughly acquainted with their business area, so much so that they could even be officially entrusted by the Management with the conduct of purchase negotiations: the acquisition either of building land for the ex-novo construction

of buildings – whose cubature usually corresponded to that of preexisting buildings which were to be demolished – or of prestigious buildings of significant historical, artistic or local functional value. On other occasions, to the contrary, the Company would resort to the support of local professionals, sort of ‘estate agents’, who were soundly knowledgeable about the features and development potentialities of the various city areas (such as suitability for residential housing or for the operation of insurance business, the nearby presence of other insurance companies or banks headquarters, availability of facilities, etc.). Thus, the Company would make an investment either in office venues or residential buildings, or both of them. In most cases, the last option would apply, so that entire blocks would be purchased, with the aim of optimizing investments over time and recovering expenses by renting out premises later on to associated or affiliated

companies, or to other companies or to private individuals. The ground floor was then usually reserved for shops, the first floor for offices, all other floors for private accommodations. After identifying the deal, local brokers would carry out proper market surveys and collect basic information on the building or the location area. Once the Management assessed the proposed offer, one of its members or a technical consultant would be sent to the premises for a closer examination of the matter and to make the first contacts needed to conclude the purchase. In case the investment was judged positively, and subject to approval by the Board of Directors on the basis of a detailed report, the Management would issue a mandate to one of its members and appoint a lawyer to assist him, in order to proceed with the acquisition⁹. Generally, these were the rules and procedures to abide, as reconstructed on the basis of the available archival sources¹⁰.

Returning to Besso's Autobiography, all real estate investments he promoted and cited in his work are part of a wider internationalization project: Rome, Trieste, Milan, Turin, Florence, Naples, Palermo and then Paris, Vienna, Prague, Constantinople, Cairo, Belgrade and Venice 'and elsewhere'¹¹. More specifically, and in chronological order, Besso's investments included (distinguishing between ex novo constructions and acquisitions of prestigious buildings): Constantinople (1908-1913) in rue Voivodina, now headquarters of Sigorta; Turin (1909-1911) in via Cernaia, facing piazza Solferino, by engineer Pietro Fenoglio; and Palermo in via Roma, where a stylish building was erected by architect Ernesto Basile (1910-1912); Belgrade (attested as from 1901) at the corner of kralja Milana ulica and Bulevar kralja Aleksandra; Florence (early 1900s) in piazza della Signoria; Cairo (1908) in rue Ema del Din et rue El Manakh; Paris (1909) in avenue de l'Opéra; Naples (1909) in via Agostino Depretis.

Generali owes immense gratitude to Marco Besso, as he steered the Company to worldwide success by strengthening the Company's presence in the Mediterranean basin, above all in the east, and in the major ports across the Atlantic. Between the '80s of the XIX century and the beginning of the Great War, the Company ranked as the first insurer of both the Hapsburg Empire and the Kingdom of Italy. On these foundations Besso built a network of affiliated companies



Fig 2. Assicurazioni Generali's building, building at the Bauermarkt, Vienna. © Archivio Storico Assicurazioni Generali, Versamenti.

that would later become the Generali Group¹². This project existed from the very beginning, as the Company's deed of incorporation of 1831 already provided that a double management structure be established, each with its own market sharing: Trieste was chosen as the seat of the Central Head Office and its technical and administrative competences spread all around the territories of Austria-Hungary and abroad, but it also maintained all major general management powers, while Venice was to be the seat of the Venetian Head Office, in charge of the Italian business¹³. Both cities played a strategic role as seaports, but in the XIX century they belonged to two different states, i.e. Trieste was part of Austria-Hungary, while Venice belonged to the Kingdom of Lombardy-Venetia¹⁴.

In 1886 Generali settled in its new headquarters in Trieste¹⁵, located in what is now known as Piazza Duchi degli Abruzzi, a highly vital passage point of the former local emporium, facing the downtown seafront. The building counts nowadays as one of the most notable and typical architectural testimonies of Trieste's flourishing XIX century (fig. 1). The building was erected between 1884 and 1886 in neo-Greek style according to a project by engineer Eugenio Geiringer¹⁶. The Company opted for the construction of an entirely new building which would provide comfortable venues, equipped with a modern electric system (the first in town, realized by a Turinese company and consisting of a



Fig 3. Assicurazioni Generali's building, Václavské náměstí, Prague. © Archivio Storico Assicurazioni Generali, Versamenti, scheda 28267.

total of 400 bulbs, with power ranging from 8 to 200 candles, distributed within the whole building¹⁷), an efficient heating system (powered by water in corridors and by gas in the rooms), as well as a special security cell for the storage of valuables and to be used as an archive for vital documents. In addition, the chosen location offered ample potential for further enlargements in the surroundings¹⁸.

Geiringer worked as the external Company consultant in charge of real estate operations (from 1871 – at least – to 1904, when he was replaced by engineer Giorgio Polli¹⁹). He would be entrusted with the supervision of all stages of any estate investment, from the calculation of expenditures and returns, to the selection of the materials to be used, from the decoration works, etc. to the support to architects (chosen from time to time among the most renown professionals available in each location) during the various phases of project execution. He would also carry out analyses of the critical points in a project or submit personal projects himself.

From 1879 to 1881 he assisted architect Otto Thienemann during the realization of the agency office in Vienna (which later became Austria's Head Office), located at the Bauermarkt (fig. 2). Owing to the long-standing business relations in the city (the Company had been operating its business in the city already since 1832) and the substantial commercial interests of the Company in this European region, Vienna was



Fig 4. Assicurazioni Generali's building, Procuratie Vecchie, piazza San Marco, Venice. © Archivio Storico Assicurazioni Generali, Versamenti, scheda 64703.



Fig 5. Assicurazioni Generali's building, piazza Venezia, Rome. © Archivio Storico Assicurazioni Generali, Versamenti, scheda 64703.



Fig 6. Assicurazioni Generali's building, palazzo Venezia, piazza Cordusio, Milan. © Archivio Storico Assicurazioni Generali, Versamenti, OGG001062047.

for Generali one of the most attractive and significant places for real estate investments. The papers related to these activities can be consulted at the Historical Archive and are some of the few surviving sources on real estate investments abroad, as well as on how these operations used to be managed²⁰.

Another strategic operational outpost within the Hapsburg Empire was Prague. The Prague general agency, staffed with about a hundred employees, ranked among the most important of the time. Indeed, many regional agencies were under its direct management. The Prague agency played a pioneering role in several fields: in 1884 it was the first agency to hire female personnel – a first successful experiment which would be echoed by the Head Office in Trieste in 1892 – and it was the first agency to be housed in a modern building (located at the corner of Wenzelplatz and Heinrichgasse²¹ (fig. 3)) specifically designed to meet modern business requirements. It included electric lights and a central heating system. It is a well-known fact that the writer Franz Kafka worked there as a temporary clerk ('Aushilfskraft') of the life department from October 1907 to July 1908²².

It must not be forgotten – in this context – to recall the impressive construction works commissioned by the Company in the main cities of the Italian peninsula: first of all, the restoration of the Procuratie Vecchie in Venice – the historical headquarters of the Venice Head Office, which subsequently became the Italian Head Office (fig. 4). The lease contract was signed in July 1832 by director Samuele della Vida²³ as a representative of Generali and the building owners Pietro and Leonardo Gradenigo. The contract dealt with the venues at

both the noble floor and the next floors facing St. Mark's square and the Calle del Selvatico. After purchasing these venues later on, Generali progressively expanded its possessions over time, starting in the '60s of the XIX century. In the first decade of the XX century, when most of the building venues had been acquired, restoration works were started, which also implied the adaptation of the venues to business office requirements. A first stage took place between 1909 and 1914, when the Company became the majority owner of the building, a second one between 1941 and 1943, when the last lots were acquired, and the works were executed under the direction of architect Giulio Fano²⁴.

Another emblematic headquarters in Italy is the building at piazza Venezia in Rome (1902-1907)²⁵, currently still the seat of the Company's representative office, which has served as a strategic base for the relationships with national and international institutions. This building was strongly sponsored by Beso, who made it the official seat of his activity. The construction works were led by architect Giuseppe Sacconi, who was also entrusted with the design of the entire square area. The building's wings were to serve as additions to the Vittoriano (fig. 5). The façade of the building is overshadowed in high relief of the winged lion of St. Mark, coming from Padua's city walls, where it had been positioned in 1518 after the end of the war of the League of Cambria. The original project for this building, given its far-reaching implications, would be examined and monitored by a specific commission appointed within the Management, together with Geiringer's supervision for all ongoing changes.

Geiringer also acted as a trusted technical consultant for the projects in Milan, i.e. the

demolition of Cordusio square for the construction of a Generali building designed by Luca Beltrami between 1897 and 1900 (fig. 6). The erection of palazzo Venezia in Milan, located between via Mercanti and via Orefici, involved a surface of two thousand square meters and was part of a regeneration project of the urban area extending from the Cathedral square to the Sforza castle, a most unique part of the city. Indeed, here was the pulsating heart of old Milan, whose geometric center had been Cordusio Square until the end of the XVI century. From this site – which quite probably was the political and administrative seat of the Longobard Dukes (in fact, the place-name is derived from the Latin Curia Ducis, which later became Cordusio), there departed six main roads of the ancient road system leading towards six city gates. Remarkably impressive in its appearance, Palazzo Venezia was the first city building built in Ferro concrete and citizens would soon refer to it as 'the insurance palace'. The complex also includes two buildings facing piazza Mercanti, where the discovered remains of an old medieval building façade – namely the Loggia dei Notari – still have pride of place over the square as they were included into the new building after careful restoration, thus restituting to the community some unique pieces of precious Milanese architecture of the Visconti age²⁶. The building hosted the offices of the Company's main agency, as well as the headquarter of the first two affiliated companies, i.e. the Anomina Grandine and Anonima Infortuni (Joint-Stock Companies of Fixed-Premium Insurance against Damage from Hail and Accidents), which in 1947 would be incorporated into Generali and become the Milan Head Office. ●

- 1 M. Besso, Marco Besso. Autobiografia, Roma, Fondazione Marco Besso, 1925 (reprint 1981), p. 118.
- 2 He entered Generali in 1863 and from 1877 to 1885 he held the office of secretary general, later to become a director at the Venice Head Office and eventually a technical consultant. He was appointed as president in 1909 and kept this last office until his death in 1920. For further reading, see R. Spada, Marco Besso's Personnel File. This important document is among the oldest personnel files kept at the Historical Archive, in M. Lipari, M. Marizza, S. Stener et al. (a cura di), *Stories from the Historical Archive. Events and Players at Assicurazioni Generali during the 1800s*, Trieste, Tipografia del Villaggio del Fanciullo, 2012, p. 176-180.
- 3 Minutes of Management meeting dated April 16, 1834.
- 4 For further reading, see Assicurazioni Generali di Trieste e Venezia, La proprietà immobiliare urbana e agricola, Bergamo, Istituto italiano d'arti grafiche, 1963; M.V. Gastaldi (a cura di), *Le Assicurazioni Generali di Trieste e Venezia. Monografia illustrata*, Fratelli Treves Editori, Milano, [1925], extract from *L'illustrazione italiana. I ricostruttori d'Italia: nei venticinque anni di regno di S.M. Vittorio Emanuele III*, Milano, 1925; Assicurazioni Generali, 'Bollettino', n. 4, Giugno 1941, XIX; G. Stefani, *Il Centenario delle Assicurazioni Generali. 1831-1931*, Novara, Istituto Geografico De Agostini, 1931, p. 237-264. Other useful information and pictures can be found in several issues of 'Bollettino' – the Company's magazine – in the supplements accompanying the annual financial statements from 1935 to 1943, as well as in the complementary sections on real estate and land properties published in the annual financial statements from 1949 to 1970.
- 5 The Generali Group Historical Archive is home to the documentary heritage of four historic companies, namely: Assicurazioni Generali (Trieste), Istituto Nazionale delle Assicurazioni (Ina) and Assitalia (Rome), Toro Assicurazioni (Turin). The Historical Archives of these companies are under the protection of law as they were awarded the status of 'historically significant' cultural heritage by the relevant Archival Authorities of the Italian Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities and Tourism (in 1983, 1992, 2000 and 2010 respectively). The Historical Archive of Assicurazioni Generali keeps the documents created and exchanged by the Central Head Office of Trieste. These include a wide variety of papers, ranging from the minutes of top management meetings to the papers of the various internal departments, from 1831 (year of the Company's foundation) to the end of the twentieth century. In addition, the Archive hosts some (incomplete) records of surviving documents produced by the Venice and Milan Head Offices, as well as by Anonima Grandine e Infortuni (Joint-Stock Companies of Fixed-Premium Insurance against Damage from Hail and Accidents) and other affiliated companies. The holdings take up about 14 linear kilometers of shelving.
- 6 Article n. 33 of the Articles of Association of 1831. The competences of the Board of Directors were detailed in articles 391-I in the Articles of Association of 1864. The minutes of Management meetings would report the date of the upcoming Board of Directors meeting in which the board would have to vote on specific matters – in this case related to real estate – submitted by the Management. The minutes can be regarded as an extremely significant source of information on real estate activities. The complete series of the meeting minutes of these executive bodies from 1831 to this day are kept at the historical archive and are available for consultation in digital format.
- 7 The city buildings and farm companies belonging to Generali both in Italy and abroad were (and are) a major constituent of the guarantee funds, i.e. one of the most substantial items of the Company's balance sheet, whose description in the annual management reports – as a consequence of the expansion of business and the corresponding increase in the deployment of financial means – has come to be more and more detailed over time. Within the time span considered in this essay, a thorough real estate summary would be published in the annual financial statements starting from 1895: the estate was first classified in A balance sheet or B balance sheet items (starting in 1909 urban premises were to appear in the B balance sheet and landed property in the A balance sheet; as from 1913 both classes were listed in the B balance sheet only and as from the unified annual statements for 1915-1919 they were arranged according to their location in Italy or abroad); then it was further differentiated as

to whether it was in Italy, Austria-Hungary or other countries, also as to whether it was a new acquisition or it was being constructed; and finally according to the city, with an indication of address, cadaster value and income generation. Moreover, starting in 1879 a list of all representations would appear on the back cover of the annual statement booklets, showing the premises according to their location in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and abroad together with the indication of whether it was a head office or rather an agency, their addresses and also whether it was company-owned. Thus, in order to ascertain the date of acquisition of a building or the inauguration of a new headquarters, reference can be made to both the annual statements series and the more detailed Management meetings minutes. The complete series of published annual statements from 1832 to this day is available for consultation in digital format.

- 8 Article n. 40 of the Articles of Association of 1831 provided that 10% of the gross A balance sheet value – after deducting the Management's emoluments – and 30% of the profits resulting from the B balance sheet should be allocated to the reserve fund, which would be 'inviolable for the entire duration of the Company', as well as that the money collected in this fund 'should be invested in real estate'.
- 9 Sometimes, a local lawyer would be appointed, too, in order to ensure full legal assistance also with respect to local rules and regulations.
- 10 In 1868 a selected Venice Board of Directors was brought into being: it was made up only of the Board members residing in Venice and was in charge of the acquisition and management of real estate assets located in the Italian Kingdom. The selected Board stayed in force until 1922, when the structure of the Company was thoroughly reshaped after the annexation of Trieste to Italy. For further reading, see R. Spada, The selected Venice Board of Directors. The dialectic complementary relationship between Trieste and Venice characterized the Company from 1831, in M. Lipari, M. Marizza, S. Stener et al. (a cura di), op. cit., p. 182-187.
- 11 See M. Besso, op. cit., p. 119-120.
- 12 See T. Favaretto, Lo sviluppo dell'attività internazionale delle Assicurazioni Generali tra il XIX e il XX secolo, in P. Garonna (a cura di), *Assicurare 150 anni di Unità d'Italia. Il contributo delle assicurazioni allo sviluppo del Paese*, Roma, ANIA – Associazione nazionale fra le imprese assicuratrici, 2011, p. 93-151. For further reading on the agencies' business in the Company's early years of activity in the Italian peninsula and abroad, see M. Marizza, The agencies. An immediate expansion in Europe and the world, in M. Lipari, M. Marizza, S. Stener et al. (a cura di), op. cit., p. 94-99 and S. Galasso, Expansion of the Company in the Italian territories. The importance of Carlo Alberto's authorization to conduct business in Piedmont, in M. Lipari, M. Marizza, S. Stener et al. (a cura di), op. cit., p. 134-139.
- 13 The competences of the two Head Offices were set in article n. 20 of the Articles of Association of 1831 and subsequently further specified in the by-laws of 1832, in the Articles of Association of 1864 and in the by-laws of 1885. For further reading, see R. Spada, The selected Venice Board of Directors. The dialectic complementary relationship between Trieste and Venice characterized the Company from 1831, in M. Lipari, M. Marizza, S. Stener et al. (a cura di), op. cit., p. 182-187.
- 14 For further reading, see S. Galasso, The Charter. December 26, 1831: founding of the Austro-Italian General Insurance Company, in M. Lipari, M. Marizza, S. Stener et al. (a cura di), op. cit., p. 66-71 and S. Stener, Samuele Minerbi's Share Certificate. Shares and shareholders: first steps towards the establishment of Generali, in M. Lipari, M. Marizza, S. Stener et al. (a cura di), op. cit., p. 76-87.
- 15 The first headquarters in Generali's history was palazzo Carciotti, located along the city's seafont. In 1866 the Head Office was moved to palazzo Stratti, a company-owned building, and in 1870 again to other premises in via della Procureria, behind the town hall in what is now called piazza Unità d'Italia. For further reading, see L. Ruaro Loseri, M. L. Iona, R. Costa et al. (a cura di), Palazzo Carciotti a Trieste, Trieste, Assicurazioni Generali S.p.A., 1995.
- 16 Eugenio Geiringer (Trieste 1844-1904) was an original architect-engineer mostly inspired by the neoclassical style, which was highly fashionable at the time of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. He graduated from the University of Padua with a specialization on gas lighting systems.

He was the director of Banca triestina di costruzioni (Trieste building construction bank), the president of the engineers and architects association, as well as member to several city administrative institutions. He also curated the *Civici musei di antichità e storia naturale* (Civic museums of antiquities and natural history), started the construction of the Trieste-Vienna railway and authored several projects for the railway development in the Istrian peninsula, in Carinthia and in Slovenia.

- 17 Assicurazioni Generali di Trieste e Venezia, op. cit., p. 25.
- 18 The first enlargement works date back to 1900, while in 1912 an adjacent building was erected, which was then linked to the Head Office premises through a passageway in 1930.
- 19 This was the decision taken by the Management during the meeting of December 12, 1904. His personnel file bears evidence that his last consultancy terminated in 1938. Born in Trieste in 1862, he was employed at the shipyard in Pula (Istria), worked for the Company on a temporary basis from 1886 to 1888 and was then hired as a municipal employee. Eventually, he also worked freelance. As such, together with his son Carlo, he worked for Generali as a technical and artistic consultant in charge of the management of real estate. He graduated in mechanical engineering and became one of the most prominent representatives of eclecticism in Trieste. The city is indebted to his design of several significant urban works, such as the Pescheria (fish market building, 1913) and the Chiozza block (1925-1927). As reported in his personnel file, his first consultancies date back to 1914 and his contract was subsequently renewed in 1924. As a technical consultant he became a member of the 'technical section' (made up of three engineers) of the Central Head Office in 1911, his task being that of 'overseeing and arranging the regular, functional and good management of the Company's real estate assets' (Management meeting minutes n. 2339 of 12 January 1911). In the same year, given the considerable growth of real properties, it was decided that a Surveillance Commission on Real Estate should be established within the Head Office (with competences including both commercial and technical-administrative topics), composed of 4 members from the Trieste Head Office and 3 of the Venice Head Office, the former in charge of the business in Austria-Hungary and abroad and the latter responsible for the activities in the Italian Kingdom. The Commission's by-laws were voted on during the meeting of January 18, 1912.
- 20 An additional source for the history of the Company's real estate is the Real Estate fund at the Historical Archive, which includes a considerable wealth of technical-administrative papers. Moreover, another archive is available at Generali Real Estate S.p.A., the asset management company of the Generali group, which is home to documents related to cadastral, town planning and asset management activities. Finally, complementary information on asset management activities can also be retrieved from the Central Accounting fund (with respect to assets values), hosted at the Company's Historical Archive.
- 21 The building was expropriated following WWII events in the communist countries.
- 22 As inferred from his personnel file. The Central Head Office personnel files have been preserved almost entirely from as far back as the second half of the XIX century (except for a few gaps). They include the file of this famous writer.
- 23 Holding 20 shares in his name, he was among the most prominent founders of Generali. Also, in his role as a director at the Venice Head Office he was the operational brain and the brain of the Italian business from 1831 to 1875.
- 24 For further reading, see A. Viggiano, E. Vio, G.P. Mar et al. (a cura di), *Le Procuratie Vecchie in piazza San Marco*, Roma, Editalia, 1994 e G. Morolli, U. Franzoi, A. Augusti, et al. (a cura di), *Le Procuratie Nuove in piazza San Marco*, Roma, Editalia, 1994.
- 25 For further reading, see V.S.M. Scrinari, M.L. Casanova, R. Luciani et al. (a cura di), *Il palazzo delle Generali a piazza Venezia*, Roma, Editalia, 1993.
- 26 A. Paglia (a cura di), *Il palazzo Venezia in piazza Cordusio a Milano*, Trieste, Editoriale Lloyd di Trieste, 2000, p. 54-56.

How the historical archives of large banking groups manage architectural heritage.

The case of Intesa Sanpaolo

Serena Berno and Francesca Pino

Bank mergers involve the handing over of assets including physical properties and people, both of which require documentation. It is the job of archive teams to produce the latter, identifying those aspects that will be useful to the new group in its day-to-day management of its assets.

It is essential, in fact, to gather and make available detailed information on the thousands of buildings now owned by the group. Visiting all of them would require a great deal of time, since they are located in every part of the country. Moreover, it is not easy to assess their architectural and decorative value right off the bat, nor to determine whether regional authorities have imposed restrictions on the artistic and architectural holdings or how much preservation and restoration work might be called for (or alternatively, whether it is advisable to cede or sell the buildings). Administrative and land registry records, city permits and fire safety certificates often need to be tracked down as well.

Documentary archives are located in various places, including external repositories that have been divided up due to their bulkiness, while technical and other types of drawings are often hidden away in chests of drawers or roll files in long-forgotten closets and other such spaces. Photographs taken in different periods for purposes of documentation also need to be hunted down and processed; this includes restoring them, cataloguing them, and identifying both the locations of the buildings portrayed and, whenever possible, the creators of the images.

Finally, following the merger it is fundamental to promptly establish communications between the departments of the group that are involved with artistic and/or



1) *Intesa Sanpaolo's new head office under construction in Turin in July 2013; the Porta Susa railway station is visible in the foreground. photograph: Andrea Cappello, © Intesa Sanpaolo Historical Archives.*

architectural heritage projects, book series on the group's properties, and the production of guides and leaflets for the public.

This is why the Intesa Sanpaolo Group, at the initiative of its Properties Division and Historical Archives, has set up a working group to share all available information and continue the work of collecting materials on new architectural projects. Most of these are born-digital and/or multimedia in order to meet communication needs; sometimes they are also 3D, particularly in the case of projects or models by renowned architects. Our own team is currently at work on recovering materials related to three recent projects: the Gallerie di Piazza della Scala, the art heritage museum located in what was previously Banca Commerciale Italiana's main hall; our Group's new head office, a skyscraper in Turin designed by the Renzo Piano Building Workshop (see photo 1); and the Intesa Sanpaolo 'Waterstone Pavilion' built for Milan's EXPO 2015.



2) *Banca Commerciale Italiana's headquarters on Piazza della Scala 6, Milan, on 11 September 1909. photograph: Achille Ferrario, © Intesa Sanpaolo Historical Archives.*

Work to identify and process series of paper records has been completed, for a total of more than 500 binders and registers. This entailed defining and implementing appraisal criteria; in certain cases we discarded up to 60-70% of the materials. Our search for information in traditional archival documents enabled us to identify addresses, changes in location, the dates of significant renovations as well as valuable properties that had formerly been central headquarters of banks, both private and not, that were subsequently (between the 1920s and 1990s) incorporated into our Group.

We also ascertained the potential value of photographs of the properties, which were often taken for purposes of documentation but sometimes – especially in the case of significant restoration and refurbishing work – also for communications and promotional use. Banks often commissioned prominent photographers to do this work, so the collections are also useful for those wishing to



3) CARIPLO's first headquarters, 'Cà de Sass', on Via Monte di Pietà 8, Milan, 1872. Photograph: Pompeo Pozzi (albumen print) © Intesa Sanpaolo Historical Archives.



4) Giacomo Manzù's clock in the main hall of the Palazzo delle Colonne in the 1990s. Made of embossed copper, it depicts the signs of the zodiac © Intesa Sanpaolo Historical Archives.



5) The head office of Banca Commerciale Italiana and Romana in Bucharest in the early 1920s © Intesa Sanpaolo Historical Archives.

explore the history of analog photography.

The process of building up folders for each of the properties took quite some time; it required pruning out insignificant photographs and in some cases attempting to match negatives on glass plates or on film with photographic prints. Altogether some 90,000 photographs were selected out of a far greater number; collection inventories are gradually being made available at <http://intesasampaolo.xdams.org/intesa-web> in the online database of the Historical Archives. The photographs allow researchers to work out both architectural and decorative styles and changes in the layouts of branches in different periods.

In terms of architectural history, the documents and photographs start off from the earliest phases of construction and go on to provide detailed accounts of exceptional operations, from both a city planning perspective (for example, the acquisition of adjacent areas and demolition permits) and an engineering and structural one. Our Quaderni fotografici (Photographic Notebooks) series includes two volumes on the history of the 'new' CARIPLO building – the so-called 'Palazzo delle Colonne' (1941) – and the Banca Commerciale Italiana (BCI) building designed by Luca Beltrami and built in 1911 on Piazza della Scala 6.¹ Also of interest are cases in which important historical

buildings were purchased and renovated by banks; examples include the Palazzo Zevallos Stigliano in Naples and the Palazzo Leoni Montanari in Vicenza, both of which now host Intesa Sanpaolo art galleries.

Of special note are those architects who were capable of defining the 'house style' of individual banks, men whose work in terms of planning and building can be studied and better understood with the help of architectural historians. The most interesting such cases are the headquarters of Banca Commerciale Italiana (see photo 2) and the first headquarters designed and built for CARIPLO between 1868 and 1872 by Giuseppe Balzaretti (see photo 3). His was a majestic new take on the architectural style of Florentine banks of the past, an approach he continued to use while selecting the distinctive furnishings and ornamentation for CARIPLO's branches, all inspired by the 'virtues' of security and thrift. Along with a wealth of such motifs (which can also be found elsewhere throughout Europe), many of the properties also feature precious works of art. Two examples are the clocks designed by Giacomo Manzù in 1941 for CARIPLO's Palazzo delle Colonne (see photo 4) and by Francesco Barbieri in 1955 for the façade of Banca Commerciale Italiana's Lecce branch in Apulia; both depict the signs of the zodiac.

These buildings can be compared with other 'Italian style' banks outside of Italy; see John Booker's *Temples of Mammon: The Architecture of Banking* (Edinburgh University Press, 1990). Annie Jacques's book *Beautés d'un patrimoine architectural:*

Crédit Lyonnais (Bibliothèque de l'image/ Crédit Lyonnais, 1993) provides a comprehensive survey of the international architectural heritage of a single banking institution, Crédit Lyonnais; other banks followed its example in building their own foreign subsidiaries. As for Banca Commerciale Italiana, an invaluable photo album from 1930 provides a wealth of information on the bank's properties in South America, Central and Eastern Europe (see photo 5) and the Mediterranean basin; it is available for online consultation and we hope that it will spur further scholarly research.

It is interesting to note the ways in which the design of areas for the public evolved over time. At the start of the twentieth century, staff and customers were generally kept apart by a long counter surmounted by iron grating or wood or glass panels that gave off a sense of permanence and security. In the 1920s a great deal of space began to be designated for back office activities; later, automation further impacted the interior layout of banks, with more space for customers and less for staff. Starting in the 1960s bank counters were no longer required to be orthogonal, and the rigorous separation between customers and staff by way of glass panels was eliminated to allow more informal, direct contact between the two. Finally, the move towards more open and transparent banks gradually led to the traditional bank counter giving way to customer-service desks. ●

¹ S. Bero - B. Costa, *Uno scavo ciclopeo. Il nuovo palazzo della Cariplo nel cuore di Milano* (A Cyclopean Excavation: The New CARIPLO Building in the Heart of Milan), Milan, Hoepli, 2012; S. Bero - F. Pino, *Il palazzo Comit di Luca Beltrami. Fotografie tra testimonianza e interpretazione* (1905-1990) (Luca Beltrami's Palazzo for the Banca Commerciale Italiana: Recording and Interpreting History Through Photographs, 1905-1990), Milan, Hoepli, 2014.

Naples Palazzo Ricca.

A bank since 1616

Andrea Zappulli

The Banco di Napoli Foundation and Historical Archives are located in the 16th century building called Palazzo Ricca. From 1616 to 1809, one of the oldest and richest Neapolitan banks was housed in the same building: the *Sacro Monte e Banco dei Poveri* (the Sacred Fund and Bank of the Poor).

The *Sacro Monte e Banco dei Poveri* was the second Neapolitan bank to be created, and it began its lending activities in 1563. The Monte (Fund) was created by some lawyers, who worked at the Vicaria Tribunal, in Castel Capuano. It used to function as the main courthouse. The lawyers, who pitied the debtors because of their conditions in prison, decided to create an institution, which could liberate them from their humiliating circumstances. The work began in a small office at the Vicaria courthouse. That same year, it was transferred to the Casa dei Santissimi Apostoli dei padri teatini (The House of the Saint Apostles of the Theatine Fathers). When they had to remodel, the Monte moved to some other rooms of the Church of San Giorgio Maggiore, and then returned to Castel Capuano in 1585. It was not until 1616 that the Monte found its permanent location.

That same year, the building belonging to Gaspare Ricca on the street known as Via Tribunali, was purchased for 10 thousand ducats. Its proximity to the Vicaria Tribunal gave meaning to the choice of governors of the Monte and Banco dei Poveri. The Square in front of the Courthouse offered an appropriate context for the vocation of the Monte because of the so-called 'Pillar of Shame'. This pillar served as a form of punishment for debtors, a means of exposing them to public ridicule. This was directly connected to the activities and the spirit of solidarity connected to the Monte dei Poveri, whose main objective was to improve the conditions of debtors and to avoid the



Main entrance. Damiano Falanga, © Fondazione Banco di Napoli.

proliferation of usury.

Today, the building of the Monte is a well-structured complex, the result of successive restructurings, which took place over the centuries as a consequence of the continuous evolution of the architectural structures as the needs of the credit and charity institution changed. Although the construction of the building has never been uniform, what was once the Monte dei Poveri now has a certain equilibrium and harmony in the sum of its parts. This shows the careful and continuous consideration shown throughout history when the challenges and logistical choices were addressed.

The building, as previously mentioned, was not created for the Monte, but was adapted for this use only in 1616, following its acquisition. Before that time, the Ricca family residence had all of the characteristics of a typical single-family residence built



Entrance, second floor. © Fondazione Banco di Napoli.

in the 16th century. One of the first changes made to the building was the construction of the oratory chapel of the Monte. This reflected the need for a place of worship, for prayer and traditional religious practices tied to the founding fraternity of the Monte, in addition to offering a tangible symbol of the mission of hope and comfort for the troubled members of the devout institution. That is how the typical Neapolitan structure came into being, with a deep courtyard and a clearly visible chapel, lending a civil function similar to other buildings housing charitable organizations.

The acquisition of the building on the part of the Monte dei Poveri inevitably changed the layout of the main structure, without touching the staircase to the right of the entryway. This stairwell still features the Ricca family crest, typical of that era, with the development of the walkway and ramps, which did not face the internal



Clocktower. Damiano Falanga, © Fondazione Banco di Napoli.



Corridor. Damiano Falanga, © Fondazione Banco di Napoli.



Detail. Damiano Falanga, © Fondazione Banco di Napoli.

courtyard.

At first, the transformations had to be small so that the Monte was able already in 1617 to open its doors to its new offices. The most dramatic changes could be found in the main reception hall, but then they had to proceed gradually, changing the structure of the building and adapting it to the needs of the bank and to the reception of clients.

The needs of the Monte, because of its function and the security of what was kept inside the building, brought about the addition of heavy iron grates to the windows and the creation of a series of rooms dedicated to the offices of the institution. Among these are the cloakroom and the room holding other pawned items (jewelry and fabrics) deposited at the Monte, as well as the Treasury, where gold reserves and valuables were kept. The most important room of the entire organization was the secretary's office, the place where the governors held their meetings and made decisions about the management of the bank.

At the beginning of the 18th century, the building housing the Banco had already become too small for its growing needs, both for the conservation of the pawned items and for the exponential growth of the written documents. In 1927, the governors decided to prepare a blueprint for expansion. Gaetano Romano,

Giovan Battista Naucclerio, Domenico Antonio Vaccaro and Giuseppe Stendardo presented their proposals. The proposal made by Stendardo was chosen and the work was started. The work centred mostly on the enlargement of some rooms near the Cloakroom of pawned items, the Auditing room, an office dedicated to the corrections and audits done on account books, and the Ruota, where credit documents and payment orders were issued to clients.

Major work was done between 1729 and 1736. This was when the stairway with disjointed flights was created, a creation by Ferdinando Sanfelice. In order to reach the two edifices, which were the result of the new formation of the building, he imagined a stairway with misaligned entrances, where each flight of stairs rests on the same central wall, while running alongside the two separate buildings. That way, when climbing one of the flights of stairs, the two staircases never meet, as they run alongside each other.

In 1770, Gaetano Barba was given the task of redoing the façade of the Banco, which had suffered enormous damage to its structure and foundation because of water leaks and the presence of a natural underground channel. In the 1760s, the entire structure had risked collapse. The work continued until 1772 and brought about the demolition of the original façade of Palazzo

Ricca. The presence of the vaulted entryway and the structures behind it prevented possible distortions and created the conditions for a balanced solution.

The deepest and most important modifications were carried out upon the acquisition of the adjacent palazzo Cuomo, and when the entire documentation of the eight public banks was brought to the Monte dei Poveri complex as a result of the royal decree of 1819. This united all of the documentation of the old public banks and the Banco delle Due Sicilie, which was created in 1809.

At present, it houses the Banco di Napoli Foundation, which pursues: social interests and promotes economic and cultural development; distributing funds and supporting projects in scientific research, instruction and education in the humanist and economic fields; the improvement of healthcare equipment; and the protection and promotion of the patrimony and artistic, archaeological, museum and environmental activities.

The Historical Archives of the Banco di Napoli represents an extensive patrimony of information for the community of researchers in the fields of economics, history of art, sociology and history. In its 330 rooms, there are documents that have been archived for 200 years in the Palazzo Ricca building, which once housed one of the oldest Neapolitan banks. ●

The UniCredit headquarters in Milan

Francesca Malvezzi

The penchant to be open to innovation is a feature that goes with UniCredit from the beginning, not only in seeking the most technologically innovative solutions to meet customer needs, but also in acquiring cutting-edge facilities in which to allocate the executive offices. The historic headquarters of Cordusio Square and the new UniCredit Tower in Milan are the examples that best illustrate this attitude to change and innovation within the banking group.

At the end of the XIX century, Cathedral Square was completed, the city of Milan knew a period of fervent renewal of urban structure which affected the arrangement of the Castle area, the Foro Bonaparte and the Parade-ground, as provided by the 1886 town plan. The banks took part in this process of the city's modernization and committed to building new branches of prestige and high architectural quality, an expression of corporate identity. Following the trends of other major banking centers, the construction of lending institutions' representative buildings was gathered in the urban area of Cordusio Square, the natural point of convergence and connection between the center and the periphery. In just over ten years the arrangement of the city center was completed and, notably, of the Cordusio ellipse, which at its birth aroused discussions and doubt both for the many road outlets and for the undoubted planning difficulties to operate on disunited curvilinear sections. Among the major banks that adopted new and modern building headquarters in the area, Credito Italiano stands out. The Bank of Genoa, founded in 1870, took the name Credito Italiano in 1895 (then UniCredit) and decided to expand its activities, taking over the business and staff of the bank branch of the historic company Vonwiller. The new Milan offices were opened in a rented building in Manzoni St., n. 4. With the rapid development of business, already in 1897, however, the need to have its own headquarters arose. The choice

fell on the area of the greatest transformation: Cordusio Square. Here Credito Italiano built its headquarters through one of the most famous architects of the time: Luigi Broggi, former designer in Milan of the Old Stock Exchange building and the Bank of Italy headquarters. These projects had allowed Broggi to enter into relationships with many bankers, including Mr. Balzarotti, then director of the Milan branch of Credito Italiano. Broggi suggested to Balzarotti the opportunity to buy a plot of land still available in the Cordusio area: the idea was a good one. The area was purchased in 1899 and the responsibility was given to the architect for drawing up the building.

The new building was inaugurated in 1902 and in 1907 the Board of Directors moved from Genoa to Milan, confirming the prominence acquired by the city as a financial center. The project, realized by Broggi, is the historic core of the block where the offices of the Milan Branch and the executive offices of UniCredit were housed for over 100 years until the construction of the UniCredit Tower. The historic core of the Credito Italiano building has a linear and volumetric remarkable sobriety. The load of the decoration reveals itself clearly in the ornamental facade design that recalls the subtle, careful work of a goldsmith, with miniature effects and attention to detail. A tribute to the ancient specialization of the place, which has been known since the Middle Ages for goldsmith shops. The facade has a concave front, with extensions into adjacent Broletto and Tommaso Grossi streets, and bears the imprint of the eclecticism of the time, but also the special dignity that characterizes the architecture of those years. This architecture is not insensitive to some elements in the incipient flowering of liberty, to which, two years later, the same Broggi would be converted to produce, at Tommaso Grossi St., the building of Magazzini Contratti, the first warehouses in Milan. The measured approach given to the prospects



Credito Italiano headquarters facade in Cordusio Square realized by Broggi: 1905. © Archivio storico UniCredit.

of the historical building would facilitate the harmonious insertion in the original central plot of the post-war architecture. The original site is only a part of the 6000 square meters of the block currently in use. In this vast area there was a set of composite and extremely disjointed constructions, made up of buildings of different styles built to be hotels and homes. Due to the continuous increase of work and the number of employees, Credito Italiano had to gradually establish its own offices also in adjacent buildings, a temporary solution soon became inadequate. Therefore the need to have a building complex of organic structure and unitary authority was posed. In addressing the problem of the new design, the situation of the lot was carefully examined. It was decided to absorb in the new project with the old part, taking it as a point of reference and a departure from the remaining body. The facade of the former headquarters of Magazzini Contratti, a fine example of Broggi's Art Nouveau architecture, which had suffered the loss of its architectural design due to continuous change of use, was preserved, thus respecting even the deep emotional bond that the city had with the building that had housed the first department store in Milan. The remaining buildings were demolished. The



Cordusio Ellipse, 1970. © Archivio storico UniCredit.

newly built area composed of 3500 square meters, the design, entrusted to the architect Giovanni Muzio, adopted a sense of flexibility. The work was begun in 1963 and completed in 1968. The buildings were divided into different units, which follow the track of the streets, with 6 floors and a covered terrace with a height of 23 meters. The central body of 7 floors above ground has a characteristic dome that wraps around the building appropriately, at the same time masking the so-called technical volumes, namely the various rooms intended for particular installations. In correspondence to the entire surface, 4 floors within the grounds were made, which received, at the center, a large three-floor armored room, designed with safety specifications and for the storage of customers' or the Bank's bonds. In the rest of the basement the technology exchanges are placed, as well as archives. In implementing the plan the structural patterns of the most advanced architecture have been followed, putting in place the specifications of flexibility in order to make them consistently

adaptable to the changing of functional needs: no more fixed rooms, but everywhere moving walls which identify and define only workspaces. The link between the new building and the historic one is guaranteed, on each floor, by a round corridor. The design of the exterior and the harmonization of the building complex in the environment of the historic center of Milan looked very difficult to chart. Muzio opted for materials - granite, copper and bronze - that evoked the idea of a certain age and that quickly acquired the patina of time.

Despite the innovations brought to the historical headquarters, at the beginning of the 2000s it became increasingly clear that the building was no longer functional for current business needs. The predominant dematerialization of banking operations and the consequent elimination, already started with the mechanization process of the seventies, of strenuous and repetitive activities, marked out by heavy work peaks (closing of accounts, the capitalization of interest on deposits, counts for crediting of coupons to



The Muzio's facade, 1970, photo: M. Mulas.

depositors etc.) and the need of large deposits for the custody of paper documents proving the activity, have, in fact, revolutionized construction methods of financial headquarters, eliminating the technical reasons that advised against the use of properties for rent because of the expensive adaptation of the places to the specific requirements of banking activities. Moreover, Cordusio Square had gradually lost its central role of financial hub in Milan, expanding the possibilities of finding new spaces in other strategic points of the urban area. As it happened, at the end of the nineteenth century, the Group had decided to support the urban renewal projects undertaken by the city and to move its Headquarters to the area between the Porta Garibaldi Station, the former Varesine and the Isola neighborhood, the greatest work of urban renewal made in the center of Milan and one of the main in Europe with its more than 290,000 square meters.

UniCredit Tower, designed by Argentine architect Cesar Pelli of Pelli Clarke Pelli architectural study, is an integral part of the Porta Nuova district and is part of a wider project called 'City Plan', which aims to reorganize all the major European branches of the UniCredit Group. The streamlining of locations, only in Milan (26 to 5), has reduced by more than 55 thousand square meters of occupied space.

The UniCredit Tower complex consists of 3 towers, respectively, 230 meters (32 floors, 145 meters without the Spire), 100 meters (22 floors), and 55 meters (12 floors). One floor of Tower A is about 950 square meters, 900 square meters one of the B and 1100 square meters one of the C. They host approximately 4,000 employees and allow annual savings of about 25 million Real Estate expenses.

With its 225 meters high UniCredit Tower is now one of the tallest building in Italy thanks to the Spire, a shaped spire structure about 80 m, which completes tower A. The Spire, which is an open slender spiral, is constructed by curved surfaces of different diameter and size, capable of facing wind loads, snow and adverse weather conditions.

Tower A, whose top can be reached by elevator in 44 seconds, is visible from 10 km away and it is four times as high the Tower of Pisa and twice the Milan Cathedral. 180,000 m³ of concrete was used to build UniCredit Tower. The surfaces of the towers are covered with 49,900 m³ of glass. Steel structures have a total weight of 30,000 tons. The three buildings are traversed by 800 km of electric cables, with 393 cells per 20,15 KW peak for the one photovoltaic system. Each building has two solar panels to produce hot water.

The three buildings have received from the US Green Building Council the LEED Gold certification (Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design) for urban regeneration and the environmental sustainability. The US Green Building Council is the organization that promotes and guarantees, in over 100 countries around the world, a global approach to sustainability. The Buildings won this award thanks to the 22.5% energy savings, the 37.3% reduction in the use of drinking water, the 100% reuse of rainwater, the 93% recycling of construction waste, the 20.5% of recycled material used in construction and the 41% of construction materials sourced locally. All this has translated into a reduction of more than 40% of CO₂ emissions.

UniCredit Tower also is looking ahead to the concept of space and labor, in line with the most innovative models of workplace. The interior spaces are united by the desire to encourage socialization and well-being of the person, with flexible spaces in line with changing professional and personal needs. The Group has started the project 'take your space' which implements a new concept of space, favoring an ever greater harmony between work demands, social sphere and daily life.

In this context, great importance was allocated to common use areas (such as meeting rooms, informal meeting areas, auditorium), which occupy about 40% of the



The new headquarters: Tower A, 2014. photo: M. Puoti.

total area, in addition to the open and totally transparent spaces, with the almost total elimination of Single rooms.

Predominant characteristic of the different spaces, available to those who live and attend UniCredit Tower, is indeed 'multi-disciplinary', designed to create a friendly atmosphere and at the same time adaptable to the needs of businesses.

Meeting rooms are alternated with open areas that, using reconfigurable furniture, peninsulas and couches, allow individual and group work. Three terraces overlooks Gae Aulenti Square, ideal for informal meetings or for relaxing in the open air.

The so-called TreeHouse, for example, available spaces for the individual or

group work and for informal meetings, are the result of a project born from the desire to bring a bit of nature in offices, creating an imaginary path between the park, which will be built near the Towers, and workspaces. The rooms take advantage of the double height with meeting rooms that resemble tree houses. The main theme is the nature with some of its elements (water, earth, air). The materials are mostly wood or recycled. The layout of the interior of each meeting room is composed primarily by art installations and furniture made from recycled materials, restored or eco designed in order to offer rooms that are harmonic and at the same time unique. An integral part of the TreeHouse is the vegetable garden places on



The terrace overlooking Gae Aulenti Square, 2014. photo: M. Puoti.



The TreeHouse meeting room, 2014. photo: M. Puoti.

the terraces, where employees of UniCredit, who joined 'Grow your space', can cultivate a small plot of land and follow it in its entire life cycle, taking care of plants and vegetables, from planting to harvest.

Evolution of open space, the Smart Working also allows to choose between different rooms depending on the needs of businesses. For more formal meetings, for example, there are available meeting rooms of various sizes and a room equipped with video conference. The Focus Area is instead designed to encourage concentration, while the Phone Booths (payphones) allow you to make calls in privacy. A multifunctional space, the so-called Flexi Room, allows for meetings with two or three people and sharing documents with colleagues in other locations through a video wall.

UniCredit Tower also houses a new weather forecasting station for the city of Milan. Right in the highest tower of the complex built in Gae Aulenti Square, advanced meteorological instrumentation was installed, all in collaboration with the Epson Météo Institute.

This project stems from the desire to deepen and conduct scientific experimentation on climate and, as a first objective, focuses on the collection of meteorological data for the study of the phenomenon called 'heat island' in the city of Milan. The scientific

study is completed with the research on General Visibility through the collection and analysis of images captured from HD webcams also installed on UniCredit Tower.

The data collected will contribute to the creation of a historical series and weather patterns related to Urban Heat Island (or UHI) of Milan, with particular reference to temperature, wind conditions, humidity, rainfall, transport and storage of pollutants. UniCredit Tower is, according to experts, a place of ideal detection, both for the height of the structure and the absence of buildings in the immediate vicinity, both for the possibility of placing the instrumentation at different height levels. The installation of special tools on the Towers will allow a recording of the parameters on a continual basis, allowing researchers to collect more data to build predictive models even more accurately.

The regeneration of the area taken over by UniCredit was finally completed with the building of a new multi-purpose space, the UniCredit Pavilion, designed by the architect De Lucchi. It is open to the city for meetings, conferences, conventions, exhibitions, performances, seminars and has an auditorium with 700 seats. It also hosts a space dedicated to the exhibition of art and visual content and a nursery that can accommodate 60 children, between 0-3 years of age. The

architecture enhances the natural resources: the lightness of the structure and the brightness of glass combine to create an inviting atmosphere where constructive technical innovations allow the building to connect the park, the square and the modern and vertical heights of UniCredit Tower. ●

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The Banque Centrale du Luxembourg

René Link

The Banque centrale du Luxembourg (BCL) currently occupies four buildings, all located in Luxembourg City and spread across two sites. The main headquarters consist of two buildings bridged together and located on the 'Berlaymont' site. It is hosting the Board of Directors and some 275 staff from several departments. A second building, located opposite the main site, underwent renovation works and opened in December 2015. The second site, 'Monterey', is hosting additional departments, a numismatics centre, an exhibition hall, an auditorium and a learning centre.

These various buildings all have very different architectural styles but share a number of surprising elements linking them to the history and the evolution of the Luxembourg society from the 19th century to present times.

The architecture

The Berlaymont buildings

The first building of the BCL headquarters was built in 1902 on the 'Berlaymont' site and is a perfect example of the revivalist architectural style that prevailed at the turn of the century. This expressive architecture pulls together neoclassical elements, allegories and ornaments drawing from the Greek mythology. Proportions according to the golden section confer to the building a well-balanced grandeur. The dominance of vertical lines is skilfully cut across by the horizontal lines of narrow corbelled balconies, which are purely ornamental. The mansard roof is reminiscent of the style of French provincial prefecture headquarters. It is heightened at its ends and in the middle of the build, slightly protruding from the principal line of the front of the building, and suggests in a discrete but visible manner the existence of towers, thereby conveying to the passer-by a castle-like appearance, symbol of strength and secure location. A monumental staircase lodged between columns of Doric style leads



© Banque Centrale du Luxembourg.

the visitor to the main hall that has managed to preserve its 'Art Nouveau' character throughout time and generations. This triumphant architecture aimed to impress and to symbolize the economic power of its owner. Hence, it comes as no surprise that this building was originally erected as the operational and administrative headquarters of an important commercial bank. It was purchased by the BCL in 1998.

The second building of the headquarters, adjacent to the first, was inaugurated in 1962 and was clad with a modern glass facade in 2001. It is a purely functional building with a cubical geometry that openly contrasts, albeit in a delicate manner, with its flamboyant 1902 neighbour. The building offers a splendid view of the European district of Kirchberg. BCL headquarters are strategically located on a straight axis connecting downtown Luxembourg City, an international finance and banking centre, and Kirchberg, an area that is host to major European institutions, both vital economic and political hubs for the Grand-Duchy. This building has been named 'Pierre Werner' as a tribute to the 'Founding father of the euro' as per decision of the Board of the Bank, of which Mr Werner was a member since the creation of the BCL in 1998.

The Monterey building

The building of the 'Monterey' site is a recent construction dating back to 2005. It is an elegant and slender building with a sleek front wall, punctuated by glass panels and narrow strips of concrete, unadorned nor embellished, with a very discrete main entrance and without any visible window. The very small slant front facade suggests an arcade; indeed, the building stands as a transition between the urban landscape of the city centre and the green belt of the park, which shimmers like an optical extension on the building's prominent glass body.

Historical sites and designations

The Berlaymont buildings

The name of the location of the BCL's headquarters 'Berlaymont' is reminiscent of a place of historical importance of the old fortifications of the fortress of Luxembourg. This designation is very old and predates that of the headquarters of the European Commission in Brussels, its namesake, by several centuries. The Earl Florentin de Berlaymont (1550-1628) was Governor of the Duchy of Luxembourg from 1604 until his death in 1628, when Luxembourg was under Spanish rule. The Earl undertook considerable building works to reinforce the enclosure

of the fortress, including a huge bastion named after its creator in 1638.

The 'Berlaymont' site carries additional elements of historical interest. In 1684, Louis XIV troops besieged the fortress of Luxembourg under the command of Marshalls Créquy and Vauban. The entry of French troops was made possible due to a breach opened in the 'Berlaymont' bastion. During the construction of the building, remains of this conquest (grenades) were unearthed. The reinforcement works undertaken by the Earl of Berlaymont were obviously insufficient to safeguard the fortress against French military savvy.

Today, the BCL headquarters stand precisely on the location of the bastion 'Berlaymont'. This location, lodged on a promontory dominating the valley of the Alzette river (an emblem of the Luxembourg national anthem) was much sought after at the end of the 19th century and various projects were contemplated at the time – including the construction of a national library, a memorial for national hero John the Blind and a paintings gallery – albeit none materialised in the end.

The Monterey building

The designation of the second building of the BCL, the 'Monterey' building, also has deep historical roots. Under the command of Earl Don Juan Domingo de Zuniga and Fonseca, Earl of Monterey and Fuentes, general Governor of the Netherlands, the fortifications of Luxembourg were reinforced from 1671 to 1673. By decree of 12 December 1673, a street in Luxembourg was named after the Earl of Monterey, which was then extended to the outskirts of the fortress after its dismantling in the 1870s and in which the second BCL building is now located.

Historical details about the two locations: a mirror of the social and economic history of Luxembourg

The two BCL buildings ('Berlaymont' and 'Monterey') became part of the urban landscape after the city opened itself following the dismantling of the fortress walls in the 1870s. This dismantling was a condition included in the 1867 Treaty of London by the Great Powers who, at the same time, declared the Grand-Duchy of Luxembourg to be perpetually neutral and independent and placed the country under their special protection.

The demolition of the fortifications and the filling of the moats from 1870 onwards gave rise to new plots of land that the Government reserved itself the right to sell under strict conditions, which were laid out in construction regulations designed to confer a style of Parisian boulevard to the main arteries of the new areas. At the same time, the tight control of the Government over the plots of land located in the fortress area contributed to avoid, more or less successfully, unwelcome real-estate speculation. Asking prices negotiated between the Government and the future owners were set at such a level that only affluent members of the upper class were able to purchase them. Indeed, notaries, lawyers, businessmen, industrialists and prominent politicians were living in the villas built in those new housing estates. That is how a cordon of wealthy residential neighbourhoods came to form a transition between the core of the old fortress and the parks spread out on the free plots of land beyond the former fortifications. Both sites of the BCL are to be found within this cordon.

Berlaymont

The first owner of the 'Berlaymont' estate was a rich widow, a direct descendant of a dynasty of steel barons. In her large villa, she lived with her extended family spanning several generations and domestic servants that befitted her lifestyle. The villa was prestigious enough to house later on the French Embassy for a couple of years until it was acquired by a renowned commercial bank. The same bank built in 1902 the aforementioned building that now serves as the headquarters of the BCL. The villa was demolished in 1962 and subsequently replaced by the so-called 'Pierre Werner' building. In 1998, the BCL purchased this estate to use it as its headquarters, after undertaking major refurbishments to make the buildings compliant with central banks' high security standards and IT requirements.

Monterey

The list of early owners of the 'Monterey' building is similar to those who had purchased the 'Berlaymont' estate. The first building on the 'Monterey' site was a resolutely upper middle class villa and was constructed in the 1870s by the widow of a former minister of the Luxembourg Government. The following owner (from 1897) was a



both photos: © Banque Centrale du Luxembourg.

member of parliament, son of a minister and nephew of the national poet. He installed the first phone in the house and rented out part of it to the Chamber of Commerce. The villa was later acquired by an insurance company, which sold it in 1936 to the National Bank of Belgium (NBB), when the latter established a branch in Luxembourg in the framework of the Belgo-Luxembourg Monetary Association. The NBB transformed the building into a fully-operational office and a residence. When both Luxembourg and Belgium adopted the euro, the monetary association ended. Concomitantly, the NBB branch closed down and the BCL took over the building.

The succession of various owners of the sites that today belong to the BCL illustrates very well the transition from the steel industry and political elite towards a services-oriented economy, thereby symbolising in broad lines the transformation of the Luxembourg economy over the past 150 years. ●

Headquarters building of Norges Bank

The Central Bank of Norway

Kristin Fagerhaug

Summary

Architects: Lund & Slaatto

Design and construction period: 1974-1987

The Norges Bank building from 1987 is unique in a Norwegian context. Filling an entire city block in the old part of central Oslo, it is the most expensive public building from the 1970s and 1980s. The quality and elegance of the materials used in construction can be matched by few other buildings in Norway. At the same time, the Norges Bank building radiates a subdued sober-mindedness and rationality that distinguish it from the typical iconic architecture of recent decades. The harmony of colours and materials communicates substance, solidity and security.

The architectural idea behind the Norges Bank block is based on mathematics and geometry, a style known as structuralism. This idea has been uncompromisingly executed in a manner whereby the building becomes a work of art itself. Lund & Slaatto, responsible for the design, was one of the architectural firms that led the way in reviving the discussion of the nature of architecture and helped to make Norwegian architecture a more intellectual discipline. Their work recalls Mies van der Rohe's use of modular structures and Louis Kahn's ideals of 'order'. The result was to be a building that even after 30 years remains a milestone of Norwegian architecture.

Geometry

The architects were confronted with the task of designing a 65,000 square metre building of national importance on a site that comprises one complete, rather ordinary inner city block. The task included a typically 1980's limitation – the requirement to restore and keep two groups of old buildings: On the Rådhusgaten frontage, three pleasant, small-scale timber frame buildings from the seventeenth century and on the Kirkegaten frontage, two typical nineteenth-century sub-classical



Facade. Foto: Espen Schive.

buildings were required to be retained and respected.

The architects Lund & Slaatto were geometers. Like all true geometers, the formal order is taken right down to the smallest detail so that concern with clear organisation is everywhere manifest. A site with fine old buildings on it poses a real problem to architects in love with such total order.

The resulting plan for Norges Bank's headquarters stems from two decisions. The first was to find a grid that fitted so well that the old buildings click effortlessly into the overall architectural harmony. The second was to note that the old buildings were always in the middle of the elevations. This permits granite faced pavilions to define the four corners of the site, leaving the infill to be the old buildings or copper curtain walling as appropriate.

Structure

The building is typified by a substantial content of prefabricated elements. Characteristic of the building's design is a structure based on a 90 cm x 90 cm construction module. The octagonal form was adopted early for the column sections for functional

reasons in order to accommodate ventilation ducts. The octagon became an aesthetic element, which along with the square, creates variety and gives rise to a leitmotif – a molecular structure – that is the building's signature stamp. The octagon is consistently applied, and is reflected in bearing columns, stone paving, lifts, outdoor plantings and flower pots.

The fixtures and fittings have also become a part of the building's structure, adapted to the building's complex geometry. Interior ceiling, wall and floor treatments are integrated into a strict modular system, based on a narrow range of materials.

Choice of materials and interior

Quality and durability guided the choice of building materials. These include Carrara marble and granite in three colours (pink Røyken granite, light Støren granite and dark Hauge granite), concrete, metal (copper, brass and steel) and wood (beech, white laminate and merbau parquet).

Outside, the façade is composed of Røyken granite combined with copper. These materials were chosen for their durability,

workability and appearance and in consideration of the surrounding cityscape.

The interior reflects a hierarchy of materials, where the means of achieving effects are more complex. In stairwells and corridor zones, stone is the primary material. For offices, beech and white laminate are used as a contrast to the stark marble stairwells. Inside, the copper is replaced by brass, which is supplemented with steel. Stainless steel is a recurring element accenting concrete columns and beams in walls and ceilings, while brass marks the position of load-bearing structures. Concrete columns are visible throughout the interior.

The interplay of materials creates contrasts between hot and cold, while marking the different zones in the building. Stairwells and corridors can serve as an example: The floor tiles in the corridors are composed of light and dark granite, with dark granite signalling an intersecting corridor or access to a different level. The actual design of the stairwells is important, with two kinds of stairwell in the building: rectangular main stairwells in the middle of the block, and spiral staircases in the outer corners of the block. The materials in the stairwells are marble, granite and brass. The choice of materials consciously helps to distinguish offices, corridors, stairwells and conference rooms as discrete contrasts within a whole.

Inner courtyards and gardens

The open spaces between the buildings in the block are designed as gardens. They create a pleasant atmosphere and are intended to help people orient themselves in the block. The gardens can be enjoyed by strolling about in them, but are also visible from inside, from the storey the garden is located on or from the galleries, stairwells and offices on higher floors.

The gardens are composed of graphical elements and are variations on the building's geometric theme. The garden spaces differ in character according to function, location, light conditions and size and represent different combinations of main components: water, rock, vegetation and light. To distinguish south from north and east from west, the motifs of some of the gardens occur in mirror-image pairs. The gardens are in and of themselves an important part of the building's ornamentation.



Courtyard. Foto: Alexander Wisting.



Corridor. Foto: Espen Schive.

Urban fit

Opposite the bank's main entrance the architects have designed a public square – Bankplassen. The geometry of the building extends across this square and beyond, to include copper-clad structures that provide access to the car parks below and define the limits of the architect's control.

Part of the brief of the original competition was that the old buildings on the site be retained and the existing character of the area enhanced. This has been achieved by the architects by keeping the height of the perimeter of the building down to that of the area, by putting granite corner pavilions to



Meeting room Foto: Nils Aasheim



Stairwell. Foto: Espen Schive.

'break up' the long elevations, and by having window spacing generally in accord with the old structures in the building's immediate surroundings. At the same time, they compromised neither the geometry of the plan nor the modernity of the architecture. ●

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Historical quarters of Bank Handlowy w Warszawie SA

Łukasz Wiliński

Bank Handlowy w Warszawie SA is Poland's oldest continuously operating commercial bank. Its main founder was Leopold Kronenberg, a leading financier and industrialist in the nineteenth century Kingdom of Poland¹. Kronenberg allied with Warsaw's intellectuals, aristocracy and financial community to found Bank Handlowy in response to the growing needs of Polish agriculture, commerce and industry, the needs that could not be met by existing banking houses or the state bank, Bank Polski. Having recognized the demand, Kronenberg had made first steps towards the establishment of a bank as early as in the nineteen-sixties. His first efforts were unsuccessful, undermined by Kronenberg's political opponents. Consequently, the second attempt to establish the bank was conducted behind-the-scenes. In 1869 the draft of the Bank's statutes was ready and, with some changes, it was approved by tsar Alexander II on 24 February 1870. The founding agreement was signed on 30 April 1870 and the first clients were received already on 15 July of the same year.

The first, provisional office of the Bank was Mostowski Palace, made available by the government of Kingdom of Poland. After several months the Bank moved to Długa 8, a location provided by Leopold Kronenberg. The next temporary office was in Count Zamoycki's building in Mazowiecka 10. Meanwhile, the founders authorised the Board of the Bank to 'purchase, if needed, a property in Warsaw for the Bank's head office or to purchase a plot of land and have a suitable building constructed'². Already at the beginning of 1871 it was decided that the Bank would buy a plot in the centre of Warsaw, on the corner of Berga and Włodzimierska streets (currently Traugutta and Czackiego).



Head office of Bank Handlowy, the corner of Berga and Włodzimierska streets ca. 1910. To the right (slightly higher) the building purchased in 1907.

The 13,400 square ells³ property was to be purchased from the state at 2.50 rubles per square ell⁴. The main advantage of the chosen location was its proximity to the provisional office in Mazowiecka 10 and to Kronenberg's palace (the distance was ca. 200 metres from both). The plot was purchased at a public auction and, while other bidders offered higher prices, the Bank was determined enough to go much over its initial bid. The final purchase price was a little under 80 thousand rubles, nearly 6 rubles per ell⁵. The agreement was most probably closed at the end of 1872 or early in 1873.

After purchasing the land, the Bank announced a contest for the architectural design of its future seat. Five established architects entered their designs: Marceli

Berendt, Artur Goebel, Józef Huss, Bronisław Żochowski and Leandro Marconi. At the meeting of 22 July 1873, the Board of the Bank selected the designs by Żochowski and Marconi. It was however decided that both required adjustments and that the two architects would develop the final design together. It was also settled that the cost of construction and furnishing should not go beyond 140 thousand rubles⁶. The final cost of the building and furnishing of the offices totalled nearly 200 thousand rubles⁷. The construction began in the second half of 1873 and was completed in under a year. The building was expected to be ready for use by 1 July 1874⁸. In summer 1874 the Bank was ready to move to a new head office.

The new office was a two-storey

1 Established in 1815 by the Congress of Vienna, Kingdom of Poland consisted of parts of the territories of former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth captured by Russia in 1772-1795 partitions.

2 Archive of New Records (further: AAN), Archive: Bank Handlowy w Warszawie (further: BH), CN. 1/72b, p. 12, Founding Agreement of Bank Handlowy w Warszawie, 30 April 1870.

3 Ca. 4760 m².

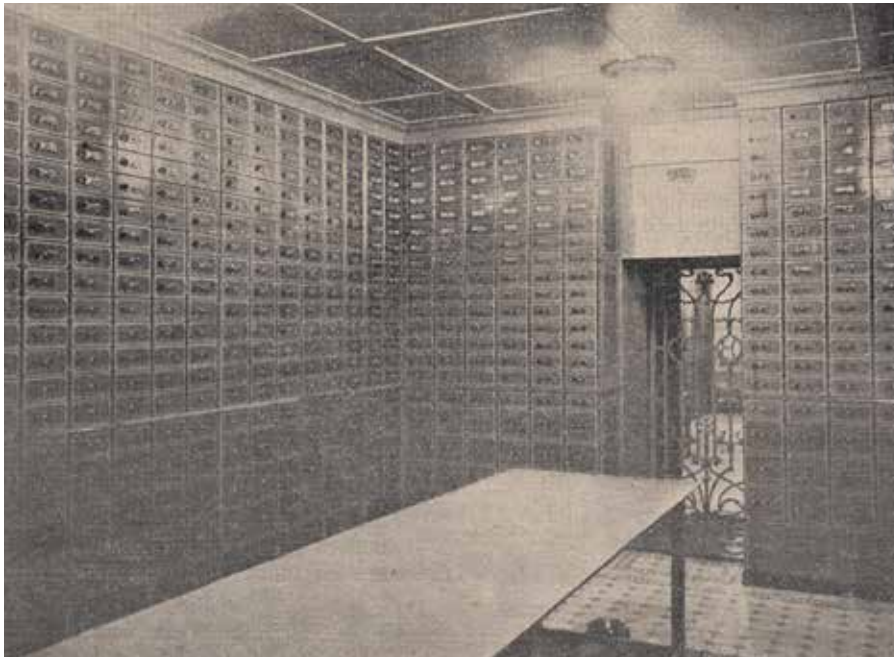
4 AAN, BH, CN. 1/72b, p. 63, Board of the Bank Meeting of 11 January 1871; AAN, BH, CN. 1/72c, p. 196, Board of the Bank Meeting of 11 October 1872; Z. Landau, J. Tomaszewski, Bank Handlowy w Warszawie. Historia i rozwój 1870-1970, Warsaw 1970, p. 27.

5 AAN, BH, CN. 1/72c, p. 161, Board of the Bank Meeting, 13 December 1872; AAN, BH, CN. 1/1, p. 335, General Assembly Meeting, 8 May 1873.

6 AAN, BH, CN. 1/72d, pp. 81, 82, Board of the Bank Meeting of 22 July 1873.

7 152,924 rubles were spent by 31 December 1874, plus ca. 45 thousand rubles later on, AAN, BH, CN. 1/72f, p. 69, Annual Report of Bank Handlowy for 1874.

8 AAN, BH, CN. 1/1, p. 345, Board of the Bank Meeting of 30 April 1874.



Safe deposit box vault, Bank Handlowy w Warszawie, 1909.

neo-renaissance building. Located on the corner of Berga and Włodzimierska streets was its main entrance – a three-door portal with Doric columns, topped by a tympanum with a clock in the centre and floral ornament on its sides. The tympanum was supported by 4 Ionic columns. Below the eaves ran a frieze with floral decorations and human heads in relief. Ground floor windows were decorated with caducei – the symbol of commercial success.

In 1907 the adjoining building (Berga 9) was purchased for 210 thousand rubles⁹, and repurposed for offices to accommodate for the growing business and headcount. Not much is known about the remodelling, other than that the changes were made only to the interiors, leaving the outside of the building unchanged. In 1909 a vault was installed under the building, with 1700 safe deposit boxes, a new service in the Kingdom of Poland, and very popular among clients¹⁰.

The Bank enjoyed a particularly high growth in business after the end of WWI. With Poland regaining independence in 1918, Bank Handlowy took active part in the country's reconstruction and in the integration of the territories formerly under

the rule of different occupants¹¹. With the growth of business volume came higher employee count. In 1919 the Bank's main office employed 263 people, a year later the number grew to 531¹². To accommodate the growth, the Board of the Bank decided to expand the head office.

The expansion started in spring 1921 and was completed in January 1925. The works took nearly four years because of their extend and the fact that the building continued to house an operating institution. The bulk of the work was performed at night. The expansion project was managed by Bronisław Żurkowski and Jan Heurich. The overhaul included unification and raising of the facade – which involved the construction of 2 storeys. The corner entrance lost the tympanum with the clock and gained a frieze with the Bank's name. The four first floor Ionic columns were replaced with pilasters. A new large operations hall was built on the side of Mazowiecka street and multi-storey saferooms were installed. The cellars were deepened by 1.5 metres and all ceilings were replaced by reinforced concrete. The reconstruction allowed for creating workposts for ca. 1 thousand employees.

The outbreak of WWII in September 1939

marked the start of difficult times for the building. The cellar became the Headquarters of Anti-Aircraft Defence for Warsaw and its district and a section of the building housed a field hospital. The Bank's staff, while continuing to perform their day-to-day duties, also carried out the tasks of protecting the building against fire and securing food supplies. The employees also opened a canteen for the injured, refugees and soldiers. 'In those conditions, transporting food, with a truly unique means of transport – a grand piano dolly found in the neighbourhood – was a genuine challenge, no lesser than the fight of soldiers on the front' – recalled Bożena Niemierowska-Szczepańczyk¹³. As a result of bombings and shellfire, particularly severe on 15 September, the third storey of Traugutta 7 building was burnt and sections of Traugutta 9, 11 and Mazowiecka 16 were nearly completely destroyed¹⁴. Regardless, the Bank's cashiers' windows were open until 23 September and the few remaining employees did their best to protect the building against fire and secure the Bank's movable possessions. The first days of October 1939 saw the Bank resume its operations. Its Deputy Director Wacław Jacobson recalls: 'The building was in chaos caused by the fire of the third storey and adjoining buildings. The archive, books, machines and equipment were gathered in a few places in complete disarray. The team was decimated'¹⁵.

After the Bank's resuming its operations, the employees were tasked with securing the institution's property, rescuing the books and documents and repairing damages. At that point, to many of them the only meal was a bowl of hot soup in the Bank's canteen¹⁶. The work was made more difficult by the fact that it became extremely cold in the first days of October and the operations hall that had lost all its window panes, needed to be cleared of snow. The temperature inside the building was only three degrees Celsius and the heating was not working¹⁷. With time the most urgent problems were solved – new glass panes were mounted in the windows and the heating was turned on again. However, overall working conditions continued to be difficult

13 Archive of Head Office of Bank Handlowy w Warszawie (further: ABH), CN. 207/8, Bożena Niemierowska-Szczepańczyk, *My Long History Working for Bank Handlowy, Retrospect*, p. 7.

14 Z. Landau, J. Tomaszewski, *op. cit.*, pp. 121–123.

15 AAN, BH, CN. 1/271b, p. 2, *History of Bank Handlowy 1939–1943*.

16 ABH, CN. 207/8, Bożena Niemierowska-Szczepańczyk, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

17 AAN, BH, CN. 1/271b, p. 6, *History of Bank Handlowy 1939–1943*.

9 AAN, BH, CN. 1/25, p. 43, General Assembly Meeting of 23 April 1908.

10 State Archive of the Capital City of Warsaw, Walery Przyborski's collection, CN. 31, pp. 262–264.

11 After regaining independence in 1918, Poland's territory consisted of parts of the lands seized in 1772–1795 partitions by Russia, Prussia and Austria.

12 *Tygodnik Ilustrowany*, 1925, 6, p. 116.



Head office of Bank Handlowy w Warszawie S.A. after expansion in 1925.

due to the damages and staff shortages.

With the outbreak of Warsaw Uprising on 1 August 1944 came another difficult period for the building. Not only did the fighting mean that the head office and all Warsaw branches of Bank Handlowy stopped operating. The solid buildings of the Bank's head office in the Traugutta – Czackiego – Mazowiecka quarter became the insurgents' stronghold and were manned by AK¹⁸ battalion 'Harnaś'. Moreover, Traugutta street became the frontline, with its even-numbered buildings occupied by Wehrmacht. Stanisław Czermiński, nom de guerre 'Miles' recalled the fighting in that area: 'From the windows of Bank Handlowy, on the corner of Traugutta and Czackiego, we shot at Germans on the other side of the street, at the rear of the current Academy of Fine Arts. Later on it got more severe. The Germans would aim at the area more often. It was constantly under shellfire and bombed'¹⁹. The most damage was caused by the explosion of a Goliath tracked mine, that caused the building's corner to collapse.

While the fighting was still under way, the Bank's management applied to the

German authorities for a permit to evacuate the Bank's possessions and the contents of its vaults that they hoped to have survived untouched. Eventually, they managed to collect all needed keys and secure all necessary permits. On 24 October 1944 a special delegation set out to check the condition of several Warsaw offices of the Bank. They found a depressing picture. 'The front section is nearly entirely burnt-out, including the ground floor. The front walls in Traugutta and Czackiego streets have collapsed entirely, and the rubble is blocking the way in. Reinforced concrete slabs are hanging loose. (...) The inner courtyard annex is partially damaged, but not burnt'²⁰. The main vault was intact, but the lock was damaged as a result of a failed attempt to unlock it with a different key by burglars. The lower vault's lock had been damaged the same way and was impossible to unlock. The outer strong-room door was destroyed and the strong-room's contents stolen²¹.

The first evacuation transport did not take place until 28 October 1944. The employees were brought in at 9:30. It was impossible to unlock the main vault because of damaged locks. However, there was a secret hatch only a handful of people knew

about. After locating it, it turned out to be two armour plates set in concrete. Burning a hole through the plates and breaking through the concrete took 4 hours. In the meantime, books, carpets, paintings, etc. were removed from the lower vault. The hatch was not opened until 13:30, with the return initially set for 14:00. All cash and the most valuable securities were packed within half an hour! The main vault hatch was bolted to prevent the theft of the remaining deposits. Over 6 million zł was removed²², all to be deposited in the storage facility rented in Grodzisk Mazowiecki²³.

It is worth noting that a special supervision system was developed. At each stage (in front of and inside the vault, during the transfer of the items to the car, during transport inside the car, on arrival and transfer of the objects from the car to the storage facility in Grodzisk, all were performed in the presence of at least one trusted supervisor. There was also a rule barring entry to the storage facility by a single person²⁴.

The second transport was planned for 2 November. The bolted vault hatch had not been disturbed so it was possible to collect another load of deposits as well as a number of paintings by Poland's most illustrious painters, such as Chelmoński, Brandt or Wojciech Kossak²⁵.

The next transport took place on 3 November and it included the remaining deposits as well as disorganized books and papers from the lower vault. The *Marschbefehl*²⁶ did not allow for the transport of personal affects, clothes or food. However, some of the Bank's employees failed to comply and loaded boxes with personal items. Feliks Wiliński recalls: 'I warned them against taking it all, because our pass did not cover textiles or food, but it was a voice crying in the wilderness. They nodded assent but quickly loaded the objects in bags and carried to the cars when I was not looking'²⁷. Of course, the Wehrmacht soldier overseeing the transport reported the fact at the exit post. The Germans searched the transport, scattering deposits and all items they considered unlikely to be the Bank's property.

22 Ibidem, pp. 8–9, 82, 83; AAN, BH, CN. 1/284c, Feliks Wiliński – Memories from the Evacuation of Bank Handlowy's Head Office Vault Contents to Częstochowa, pp. 8–11.

23 Town ca. 30 km West of Warsaw.

24 AAN, BH, CN. 1/325, pp. 7–8.

25 Ibidem, pp. 9–10; AAN, BH, CN. 1/284c, p. 15.

26 Literally: marching order, here: transfer permit.

27 Ibidem, p. 17.

18 Home Army Pol. Armia Krajowa (AK) – Polish underground military resistance active on the territory of Poland occupied by the Third Reich and Soviet Union, disbanded on 19 January 1945. AK's main purpose was to conduct military resistance and prepare a country-wide uprising.

19 http://ahm.1944.pl/Stanislaw_Czerminski/6?lang=en, [date accessed: 13 Dec. 2015].

20 AAN, BH, CN. 1/325, p. 81, Report from the Evacuation of Bank Handlowy's Head Office in 1944.

21 Ibidem, pp. 6, 81.



Remains of Traugutta 9 building, 1945.

Collapsed corner of Bank Handlowy's head office, 1945.



The corner of Traugutta and Czackiego, present view.

The incident nearly ended in some members of the transport crew being shot. In the end, we managed to appease them and the transport was allowed to leave.²⁸

By November 1944 all Bank's possessions stored in Grodzisk were transferred to Częstochowa: 1) cash 13,662,214.14²⁹ zł and 690,000 zł from Mazowiecka branch; 2) Cash of the personnel and other individuals 248,449 zł; 3) 160 bags with deposits; 4) office equipment - 14 typewriters, counting machines and perforators; 5) 30 paintings belonging to the bank and its clients; 6) books, files and documents; 7) library books; 8) 5 carpets; 9) 1 tapestry. All of the above were deposited in BH's branch in Częstochowa and it was then that the books and documents were reviewed to discover major gaps³⁰.

On 25 November a new permit for the transfer of objects out of Warsaw was received. However, due to logistical problems, the transport did not leave Warsaw until 6 December 1944. Later transports took place on 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13 and 14 December. Safes and vaults were unlocked or broken open to remove cheques, securities, accounts files, cash and other items. There were also 73 paintings, the collection of silvers, china, Persian carpets, counting machines, empty forms, etc.³¹ Unfortunately, not everything could be rescued. German authorities did not allow for the transfer of some Bank's possessions such as printing and bookbinding machines, silvers and

some paintings.

'The transports were successful in rescuing nearly all of the Bank's multi-million cash reserve [Head office and other Warsaw branches - Ł.W.] and substantial deposits of its clients. Besides, the immense assets of the Bank and its clients in the form of securities, precious paintings, book collections, including a number of rare old volumes, family documents and memorabilia and many other valuable items. With some minor gaps, the Bank managed to move files and documents that later served to recreate the balance sheets, as well as a bulk of empty forms, albums with forms necessary for the organization's reconstruction, and several dozens of office machines. The evacuation was a tremendous success, particularly taking into account the conditions in which it was performed'³².

It was decided that the destroyed buildings would be rebuilt and the temporary head office would be located in Łódź, in Piotrkowska 74. The reconstruction, based largely on original designs, was conducted by engineer Zdzisław Mączyński. The project was successful largely to personal involvement of Director Henryk Czarnecki. Bożena Niemirowska-Szczepańczyk remembers that Henryk Czarnecki '(...) used his foreign contacts to import pink marble for columns, to make them just as the ones before the war, marble slabs for floors in operations halls. The door elements (...), wood, brass, glass - exquisite. Because he was also rebuilding his flat, he was accused of defrauding some of the money for the Bank's reconstruction. It could not be proven but he was transferred

to the foreign trade office anyway'³³. The Bank returned to the rebuilt offices in 1949.

Although the Traugutta 7 building was carefully recreated to bring it back to its pre-war look, the buildings at former addresses Traugutta 9 and 11 and Mazowiecka 16-18 were rebuilt in an entirely different style, simple form, without the historical or ornamental details. This was due to the much greater damage and the necessity to rebuild them practically from scratch, as well as lack of original designs. It was also decided that the pre-war building numbers would be replaced by one address: Traugutta 7/9, one complex that would serve as the Bank's statutory head office until 1979, when it was moved to the new address in Chałubińskiego 8.

After the reconstruction, along with the offices, the building also housed a kindergarten, an excellent canteen, flats as well as a club that hosted evening entertainment events featuring Warsaw-based artists as well as ones organized by the Bank's departments including performances by former employees, often satirizing their superiors³⁴. Currently, the building houses a branch of Citi Handlowy, some departments of the Bank's main office, some residential quarters and the office of Kronenberg Foundation at Citi Handlowy. ●

²⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 18; AAN, BH, CN. 1/325, p. 10.

²⁹ In another report the amount is 13,331,714.14 zł, cf. *Ibidem*, p. 83.

³⁰ *Ibidem*, *passim*.

³¹ *Ibidem*, pp. 15-19, 42, 43.

³² *Ibidem*, p. 21.

³³ Activities conducted by the communist authorities; *Interview with Bożena Niemirowska-Szczepańczyk of 4 Feb. 2013*, original stored by Kronenberg Foundation at Citi Handlowy.

³⁴ ABH, CN. 207/9, Bożena Niemirowska-Szczepańczyk, *My Memories from Working for Bank Handlowy*, p. 10.

Polish central banks. An architectural overview

Sławomir Parfianowicz

The first Polish central bank, the Bank of Poland (Bank Polski), was established in 1828. By some measures this was relatively late. At that time, Poland – the Kingdom of Poland, consisting of only a fraction of its historical territory – was a dependent state bound by a personal union with Tsarist Russia, and later on became known as Congress Poland (because of the Congress of Vienna).

In a way, the creation of a central bank was impossible earlier, before the partitions, due to the peculiar aspects of the political constitution in the times of the sovereign Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

The idea to establish a central bank was part of a much wider, manifold policy of national economic development laid down by Franciszek Ksawery Drucki-Lubecki, the Kingdom's finance minister. The planned activities of the bank went far beyond that of an issuing bank alone towards mostly performing general and investment bank duties. The Bank of Poland was supposed to be a hub of development financing.

The Bank was granted a prominent location at the intersection of Rymarska, Elektoralna and Senatorska streets, where after the demolition of older buildings a triangular square was created just in front of the bank's plot and later on accordingly named Plac Bankowy (Bank Square). To the north it was adjacent to the residence of the Minister of Finance, and further were the buildings housing the Governmental Commission of Revenue and Treasury (Komisja Rządowa Przychodów i Skarbu). Plac Bankowy itself constituted the westernmost part of the newly established artery of the capital city ranging from Plac Zamkowy (Castle Square) along Miodowa and Senatorska streets and through Plac Teatralny (Theatre Square), where the majority of the most important institutions were gathered.

Antonio Corazzi, an architect already known for his designs of some of the most



View no. 1 Current headquarters of Narodowy Bank Polski, Świętokrzyska str. Warsaw, photo: Włodzimierz Dąbkowski NBP, (IMG 0996).

important new Warsaw buildings at that time, including the adjacent buildings of the Finance Minister's residence and the Revenue Commission, was appointed to design the bank. Born in Livorno and educated in Florence, he was appointed by the government of Congress Poland and worked here in 1819–1847.

His buildings represent a finely defined neoclassical repertoire, well set in Warsaw's architectural townscape, strongly cast with an air of classicism of the numerous buildings erected or remodelled during the reign of Stanisław August Poniatowski (1764–1795). Corazzi's buildings include Pałac Staszica (Warsaw Scientific Society) and the Grand Theatre, still among the most characteristic of Warsaw's monuments.

The Bank's building significantly differs from most of Corazzi's works. Two high storeys make up the building's main body, articulated with tall open arcades running in a fine curve around the corner, creating a very long, unbroken facade. Its impact is amplified by the contrasted texture of walls – rusticated at the ground floor, and unembellished at the top floor. The heart of the

building consists of a grand, domed rotunda hall, lit by great Diocletian windows. Initially it was intended to house the stock exchange, and later became for decades one of the most appreciated assembly halls in the city. The overall character of this building, influenced by the stylistic air of Jean Nicolas Durand's pattern book, was with no analogy in Warsaw at that time, and must have been considered to be the most modern building in those days.

The apparent source of some solutions in this design, the great rotunda, the enfilades of vaulted office rooms and the rounded corner in particular, are the buildings of the Bank of England as expanded and remodelled by sir John Soane in 1788–1833. Architectural historians attribute this to the cooperation on the project of another architect, Jan Jakub Gay, known for his close contact with British architecture. Occupying a prominent location at one of the cities nicest squares, with clearly distinguishable architectural features, the building quickly became one of the most iconic buildings in Warsaw.

In consequence of the 1830–1831 uprising, the Bank of Poland, like many other



View no. 2. Headquarters of Bank Polski SA, Bielańska str. Warsaw, collection of NBP, (Bank Polski Warszawa).



View no. 3 Building of Bank Polski, Bank Square, Warsaw, collection of NBP (rycina-03).

institutions in Congress Poland, entered the path of step-by-step liquidation, which actually took almost half a century. By the end of the process, all its components, including the building itself, were merged into the Russian State Bank.

Strongly oppressed politically, through the last quarter of the 19th century Warsaw was developing very rapidly economically, and in effect demographically gained third position in the entire Empire by the end of century, being preceded by the capital cities of St. Petersburg and Moscow only. Warsaw owed this rapid development mostly to the railway boom, which made the city a main hub in Russia's exchange with the West. The volume of transactions to be served by Warsaw's branch of the Russian State Bank caused it to recognise its existing premises as insufficient and decide to erect new ones. Construction started in 1907 on a spacious plot at Bielańska street. Leon Benoïs, an eminent architect active in St. Petersburg, was appointed for the task. The complex of buildings he designed was the largest bank in Warsaw until the current headquarters of Narodowy Bank Polski were completed. The style of the main body of the building, as the majority of bank buildings of its time, derived strongly from the Italian palazzi of the renaissance, with a very firm touch of St. Petersburg's architectural grandeur. Side buildings, like the surviving one at Daniłowiczowska street, were already tending toward modern forms.

Soon after the Russian State Bank was completed, World War I broke out. In 1915, after the city was taken over by the Germans, the Reichsbank settled here, later on, in due

course the newly established central bank of the resurrected Poland – Bank Polski SA – took over the new buildings of the State Bank (1907–1912). One may say that the historical circle closed.

In the course of World War II, the original Bank Polski premises at Plac Bankowy were burnt out as early as September 1939 after being raided by German war planes. The Bielańska street premises served during the occupation as the Warsaw branch of Germany's established Bank of Issue (Bank Emisyjny w Polsce), and then during the Warsaw Uprising for several weeks it came under siege and was bombed and burnt out as well. Of the two, only the plac Bankowy building was reconstructed after the war. The other remained, until the early 21st century, one of Warsaw's longest lasting ruins.

The new Polish central bank – Narodowy Bank Polski – established in February 1945, took as its temporary headquarters the premises of the former Państwowy Bank Rolny (State Agriculture Bank), the only surviving bank building in Warsaw at the time and one of the biggest ever built here. Nevertheless, because of the planned bank's scope of responsibilities and due to the ideological inappropriateness of the Nowogrodzka building's 'bourgeois' style, it was decided to erect a brand new headquarters for the bank.

A vast plot of land demarcated by Świętokrzyska and Warecka streets and Napoleon square (today's Plac Powstańców Warszawy) was granted for this purpose. The 1948 architectural competition was won by the design of Bohdan Pniewski, an already renowned and widely active architect. Pniewski contrasted large voluminous

components: a low, elongated, continuous building framed the entire complex alongside its external border, and a large, very high, H-plan office block inside. Stylistically, the complex was a derivative of late 1930s architecture, pretty much like many other buildings in Warsaw in 1945–1947. But the design's date coincided with the advent of socialist realism, soon to be declared the official and only accepted style in 1949. Criticised at length, Pniewski started subsequent redesigns. Between 1949–1953 more than three clearly distinguishable versions were created. They were marked with a proliferation of socialist realist decorum, but still did not satisfy the political bodies responsible for the design's final approval. The actual construction started in 1953, but based on blueprints unaccepted by Pniewski himself.

Immediately after the political thaw of 1956, Pniewski returned to the subject and provided new drafts modelled on a modernist idiom. The most interesting part was a brand new solution for the large bank's main hall facing Plac Powstańców Warszawy. It consisted of a low, glass-panelled ground floor preceded by a wide terrace, and a very long horizontal blank wall some three-times higher, intended to be covered with a mosaic. It is said that it was the offspring of Pniewski's recent tour of Mexico and the impression made by a large mural there. Pniewski died in 1965, not managing to see his design completed. It took another decade to finalise the project, redesigned in the meantime and deviating in many regards from the original drafts. ●

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The headquarters of Banco de Portugal. A long way

António Gil Matos, Maria do Carmo Rogado and Filipe Fernandes

Abstract

Banco de Portugal's headquarters went through a lot of transformations, from its rented first premises in the 19th century, up to today's building. It remained always in downtown Lisbon, the city's commercial and financial centre. In this short essay we would like to highlight the successive administrations' concern for functional and suitable premises, wherever it would be located. A gradual process of acquisition of the buildings that integrate the headquarters took place, as well as the main architectural projects for the headquarters building on the occupied city block. We also refer to the projects for a new building, away from downtown, and finally the decision for a deep rehabilitation of the downtown's building, including S. Julião's church, where the Money Museum will be installed. It was during these last construction works that, in 2010, the D. Dinis Wall, built in the 13th century, and from which there was documentary, although not archaeological, testimony, was identified. This wall is classified as a National Monument. By keeping its headquarters downtown, and opening both the Money Museum and D. Dinis Wall to the public, Banco de Portugal actively participates in the revitalization of the *Baixa/Chiado* area, which are historical grounds of the city of Lisbon.

The headquarters of Banco de Portugal First steps

Banco de Portugal resulted from the fusion of Banco de Lisboa with Companhia Confiança Nacional. Banco de Lisboa¹ was a commercial and banknote issuing bank established in the Lisbon city centre, in the old



Picture 1: City Hall front, drawing by Reinaldo Manuel dos Santos. Picture prior to the 1863 fire.
© Historical Archive of Banco de Portugal.

Council Hall building (Costa, 1963) [Picture 1]. It was built according to a Reinaldo Manuel dos Santos project (Matos & Paulo, 2013 p. 84) after the 1755 earthquake. Since the Middle Ages and particularly during the Renaissance (Gschwend & Lowe, 2015), Lisbon's centre was the main location for the country's commercial and financial activity, a situation that, with varying intensity, was maintained until nowadays. The Companhia Confiança Nacional² (Costa, 1963) was a financial society, partially capitalized by the Banco de Lisboa, and essentially destined to support loans to the Government. It occupied the same grounds as Banco de Lisboa. When Banco de Portugal³ initiated its activity, it kept the same functions and occupied the same premises as its predecessors. Beside this institutions, many others, of administrative and financial nature, such

as *Companhia de Seguros Fidelidade*, *Secretaria de Estado dos Negócios da Fazenda*, and *Administração do contrato do Tabaco*, amongst others, shared the same building. In 1863, a violent fire started in the Council Hall building and devastated almost all the block. The Bank was temporarily installed in the building's first floor that, due to its arched structure, escaped the damage. The negotiations with the City Hall and with the government commission, began immediately, aiming to allow the reconstruction and the permanence of the Bank in the same location. These negotiations, however, were unfruitful, and the Bank had to search for new premises.

The Bank's first 'own' premises

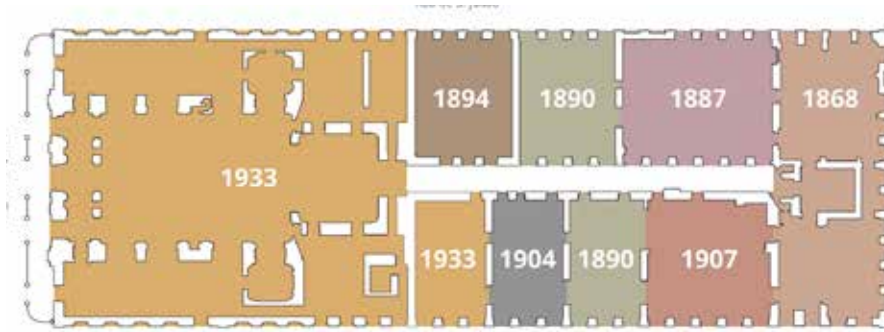
The Bank chose to find its own, adequate and independent place to practice its banking activity. As such, on September 11th, 1868 it acquired two contiguous buildings, on *Rua do Ouro*, turning to *Rua Nova d'El-Rei*,

1 The *Banco de Lisboa* was created by a Royal Charter of December 31st, 1821. It initiated its business in August the following year, two years after the Liberal Revolution of 1820, and a few days before the approval of the 1822 Constitution. Portugal's first constitution, it established the beginning of the constitutional monarchy.

2 The *Companhia Confiança Nacional* was created by Decree of September 25th, 1844.

3 Banco de Portugal was created by Decree on November 19th, 1846.

* - Archive Coordinator, ** - Archivist



Picture 2 : Chronological plan from the acquisition of the buildings of the block where the Bank of Portugal's headquarters is located. © Historical Archive of Banco de Portugal.

nowadays *Rua do Comércio*, and *Rua de S. Julião*. After adaptation works, trusted to architect Miguel Evaristo da Silva Pinto, and the subsequent structural viability test, the Bank established its headquarters there in March 1870.

Over time, the Bank developed its internal services and gained new competences, which required growth of the initial premises. In 1887, the Bank celebrated a contract with the State, in which the Bank became the exclusive banknote issuer, ending forever the regime of a multiplicity of issuers, which had been in place since 1835⁴ (*O Papel-Moeda em Portugal*, v. I, p.73). The Bank assumed the role of the State's bank and national treasury⁵. To observe its new functions, the Bank created, at the end of the 19th century, a network of branches in all the district capitals, projects for which it contracted the country's most prominent architects. In the same year that it celebrated its contract with the State, the Bank acquired two more buildings on *Rua de S. Julião* and began the necessary adaptation works, trusted to architect José António Gaspar. In the same year a new floor was added to the old building.

In 1890, a chance to purchase two more buildings, one in *Rua Nova d'El-Rei* and the other in *Rua de S. Julião*, appeared, which allowed the Bank to enlarge the occupied area. In the next years, Banco de Portugal increased the size of its premises with successive purchases of adjoining buildings, proceeding to a vast internal restructuring, in order to reinforce structures, open

safe deposit boxes, consolidate foundations, reinforce railing, improve ventilation and security, maintain the building facades unaltered so that the aesthetic spirit of the *Baixa Pombalina* - the architectural ensemble derived from the reconstruction of the city after the 1755 earthquake under Marquis de Pombal's rule - was maintained. The areas open to public access also deserved great attention in order to improve accommodation and client satisfaction.

In 1907, another building was bought by Banco Lisboa & Açores, in *Rua Nova d'El-Rei*. In order to complete the acquisition of the totality of the block, there was just one more space left, which was owned by the Archconfraternity of S. Julião. Negotiations to this end proceeded over the course of decades and concluded in June 7th, 1933 with the purchase of the church and annex property. The Bank was made the legitimate proprietor of the entire block - the largest in downtown Lisbon [Picture 2].

Headquarters building projects

It was the Bank's intention to have a headquarters building that gathered, in the same location, both its administration and its services, and that represented with dignity the institution's prestige. With that in mind, in 1910, architect Adães Bermudes⁶ was invited to present an 'adaptation and amplification' preliminary project for the building, considering all the block, including S. Julião's Church [Picture 3]. It was an ambitious project, with deeply elaborated masonry ornamentation, in the spirit of the epoch, with the main facade turned toward *Rua do Ouro*,

a main street from the city, and the east facade toward *Largo de S. Julião*. With the standoff in negotiations between the Bank and the Archconfraternity of S. Julião, however, the project became outdated and was never implemented.

Shortly after the acquisition of S. Julião's Church, the Bank challenged some famous national architects to present a concept study for the construction of the new building, having in mind the institution's functional demands. The project from architect Porfírio Pardal Monteiro was chosen. In 1938, he presented a preliminary project for a monumental building, with a ground entrance, four floors, basement and underground level. The author intended to integrate the building harmoniously into adjacent streets, while sufficiently maintaining the identity of a central bank [Picture 4]. This much anticipated project was never brought to implementation. Due to disagreements with Lisbon's City Hall, and its elevated cost, the project ultimately did not meet with the Government's approval. In both projects the church was removed from the block.

The Bank later presented two more projects to City Hall. One, in 1965, in which it was suggested that one more floor be added to the building; and another, in 1970, in which it was proposed that the church be dismantled and the building stones to a new location, allowing the construction, in its place, of a building, similar to the others, in a homogenised group. In order to accomplish that, the church's building stones were numbered. But the new architectural perspective (born from the illuminist values of the 18th century), which valourised the downtown ensemble, impaired this project. This perception was confirmed with the classification of Lisbon's downtown as an architectural ensemble, and as such a public interest asset⁷.

Headquarters services expansion

Lack of space was always a problem throughout the institution's life. The Bank tried to solve it by promoting the realization of expansion works on its headquarters and by transferring services to other, further acquired, facilities.

In 1928 it purchased a building in *Rua do Crucifixo* and, in 1942, acquired, from the banking house *Porto Covo & Companhia* liquidator commission, several buildings,

4 The privilege of banknote issue was given to *Banco Comercial do Porto* in August 13th, 1835, and later on to other banks.

5 According to clause 24 'The Bank shall be the State's bank and national treasury in the Metropolis. In this capacity, it is obliged to possess branches in all administrative district capitals of the Kingdom's continent and isles.'

6 Adães Bermudes worked for Banco de Portugal for over 20 years, having signed, besides this project, many district branch projects.

7 See Decree n.º 95/78 of September 12th.



Picture 3: Adões Bermudes project. Main front over Rua do Ouro, 1910.
© Historical Archive of Banco de Portugal.



Picture 4 : Pardal Monteiro's project. Front over Rua do Comércio, 1938. © Historical Archive of Banco de Portugal.

scattered throughout the city. In 1967, it bought a new building, in *Praça do Príncipe Real* and, in 1984 bought the *Edifício Portugal*, yet under construction, an office building which eventually became a major location where the Bank's departments were relocated. This building was later augmented with the construction of a new body, facing *Av. Almirante Reis*.

In 1992 the *Complexo do Carregado* construction, under architect Carlos Roxo's project, began, taking until 1995 until completion. The banknote production factory installations are located in this building as well as the Issue and Treasury Department. It is a geographically privileged location in a central area of Portugal. It is well served in terms of transportation infrastructure, with high security levels and functionalities, assuring a fast distribution of currency through out the country.

A new headquarters outside, downtown Lisbon

From the 1950s the Bank started to ponder the construction of a new headquarters, which would be located outside Lisbon's downtown. Many places were considered, such as *Praça do Martim Moniz* and *Praça do Cais do Sodré*. Those considerations were ultimately inconsequential.

In 1986, the Bank took the decision to construct a new building destined for this purpose. The chosen place was *Praça de Espanha*. Three years later, a tender was issued in order to gather architectural proposals for it. The choice was the project submitted by *Intergaup*, under the direction of architect Nuno Vieira da Fonseca. It was an

impressive building that, in draft form, went to an advanced state of implementation (Matos & Paulo, 2013, p. 168). Although the project did not come to realization, the idea of a single building for the headquarters was not abandoned.

Rehabilitation and restoration of the headquarters

In 2004, to overcome urgently identified necessities, namely, those concerning security requirements, anti-seismic European requisites, emergency exits, fire protection, structural reinforcement, and energy use, the Bank decided to restore and rehabilitate the entire block. For the first time a seismic resistance analysis as well as a structural reinforcement study were undertaken with reference to an entire *Baixa Pombalina* block. Meanwhile, in 2006, the *Comissariado para a Reabilitação da Baixa/Chiado* (committee for the rehabilitation of the Baixa/Chiado área) proposed the integration of the Bank's headquarters in an integrated financial centre. The Bank expressed its availability, together with the rehabilitation works, to integrate the future Money Museum into the space of the former S. Julião's Church. A few months later, in January 2007, the process of selecting the architectural firm for the rehabilitation and restoration of S. Julião's Church (The Head Office of Banco de Portugal: Renovation and restoration, 2015, p. 3) began.

In September of the same year the project was given to the architectural firm of Gonçalo Byrne, with architect João Pedro Falcão de Campos as coarchitect. This project allowed for the definition of a plan of action to overcome the above mentioned requirements, making the buildings compatible with European rules regarding seismic resistance, safety and fire protection; space distribution according to the Bank's new requirements as part of the Euro system; optimization of the building's energy solutions; and, finally, the installation of the Money Museum.

The construction's size and complexity required occupants to temporarily vacate the building. It was necessary to demolish and reconstruct two adjacent church buildings, respectfully maintaining the exterior facade, with the purpose of mooring the rest of the structure. This complexity was also due to the fact that the construction took place in a historical area of the city with surrounding space limitations. Moreover, the construction works had to deal with cultural, archeological, and patrimony preservation and restoration issues. Its worth mentioning the fruitful interchange with public authorities responsible for the preservation of that patrimony, which oversaw and supported the works.

This project had the merit of keeping S. Julião's Church in its original space, dignifying it in its utilization. All its areas were



Picture 5 - Former S. Julião's church, where the Money Museum is located, 2012.
@ Historical Archive of Banco de Portugal.

designed so as to accommodate the Money Museum's permanent exposition, with the exception of the church's nave, which was to house temporary expositions, conferences, concerts, and other events. This decision meets the City Hall's project of revitalizing Lisbon's downtown, the historical city centre, opening it to citizens, specifically through the creation of cultural spaces and rehabilitating the existent bank institutions. The construction works made it possible to save parts of the church's main altar, burned in the 1816 fire, and to find several artifacts and archeological vestiges. Namely, sections from D. Dinis Wall (Rocha, in press), the *estacaria pombalina*, a wooden structure created after the earthquake in 1775 in order to secure the alluvial grounds below the city as well as spoils from medieval, Arab and Roman times. Particular attention was given to the building's restoration. An was made to capture light and gain space, while giving back to the place harmony, uniformity and continuity.

In 2012, the Bank occupied the remodeled building. The D. Dinis medieval wall from the 13th century was described and open to public visit in 2013. The Money Museum should open in 2016.

Conclusion

Throughout its 170 years, Banco de Portugal has dedicated special attention to its headquarters, particularly after the fire that, in 1863, devastated its premises in the Council Hall building. After this catastrophe, the Bank searched the surrounding area for a proper location. In a first phase, it acquired in 1868, two buildings that, after being remodeled, were its first home. Later on, in a progressive way, between 1887 and 1933, it acquired all the block buildings. The exterior unity of the facade was marked by the internal individuality of the composing buildings and by the multiple adaptation works.

The second phase began in 1910 and continued to the end of the century. During this phase the aim was to build a functional building that dignified the institution. Projects were requested from architects such as Adães Bermudes and Pardal Monteiro for the building's downtown location, but the plans were never implemented.

Together with the continuous investment in the downtown building, over the years several other projects for a new headquarters in other Lisbon areas were created. Namely, the one of *Praça de Espanha*, in which Nuno Vieira da Fonseca's project

came to an advanced phase of development but was never accomplished.

To answer urgent necessities of the Bank, buildings were acquired in different parts of town, particularly the *Complexo do Carregado* and the *Edifício Portugal*, this last one being an office building.

More recently, with the present headquarters' rehabilitation and restoration project, which was concluded in 2012, a third phase started. This includes the maintenance of the institutional headquarters downtown, including the development of a big connection to the city, signaled by public access to the D. Dinis Wall and to the Money Museum. Both are actively devoted to the rehabilitation and promotion of Baixa/Chiado [Picture 5]. ●

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Caixa Geral de Depósitos

Sustainable architecture

Helena Real Gomes and Joaquim Pombo Gonçalves

Caixa Geral de Depósitos (CGD) was founded on 10 April 1876, and celebrates its 140th anniversary this year. Initially it was established under the jurisdiction of Junta do Crédito Público (JCP), an institution founded in 1837 to manage public funds, but soon developed management autonomy with its own Board, legally approved on May 21st, 1896.

CGD was founded during difficult times due to the existing policies concerning the promotion of public works, and both domestic and foreign loans geared toward governmental initiatives.

Although CGD was founded to serve the State and deal with the public debt, over the years it became an institution clearly linked to financial services and developed its own vocation – that of being a credit institution. In those days there were plenty of institutions with difficult banking conditions in Europe, namely savings banks, and there were countries that enjoyed strong industrial economies. In this environment Portugal promoted the concept of avoiding expenditure and of promoting small savings. Caixa Económica Portuguesa (CEP) was established in 1880 as an autonomous institution whose purpose was to receive small amounts as voluntary deposits.

Decree-Law number 4670, from 14 July 1918, established a new Organic Law and redrafted the tasks of CGD, increasing and improving its scope and including the granting of powers to the Board of Directors to establish offices, branches, delegations or agencies with CGD employees.

The 1929 great economic crisis also affected the Portuguese economy as a whole. The government encouraged reform measures that included CGD as well. CGD went through major changes in its governing



CGD head-office building, general view. © CGD-GPH.

bodies and operations. Its role as a credit institution was therefore consolidated. Within the scope of State reform, CGD played a centralising role for a wide number of dispersed institutions and resources. Two other institutions were created under its management: Caixa Nacional de Crédito (CNC) to grant agricultural and industrial credit, and Caixa Nacional de Previdência (CNP) for civil servants' retirement. The latter encompassed Caixa Geral de Aposentações (CGA) and Montepio dos Servidores do Estado. The Caixa was Caixa Geral de Depósitos, Crédito e Previdência (CGDCP) until 1969.

Caixa was aiming at becoming a financial organisation according to corporate management rules. The 1969 new Organic Law (Decree number 48953 from 5 April) confirmed it as *'(...) a collective body of public law, endowed with administrative and financial autonomy, and its own patrimony'*. Thus

CNC no longer was an annex institution and was encompassed in CGDCP which assumed its tasks, rights and obligations.

Caixa's banking services included countries with major Portuguese populations such as Brazil with the Rio de Janeiro agency as well as the Paris branch, requiring new adequate regulations for the operation of new Caixa agencies abroad (Decree number 265/75 from 28 May).

The institution's growing activity required an urgent relocation to new headquarters. The head office buildings were no longer sufficient to accommodate the growing number of departments and employees. It was important to gather every service and department into one single building and to join the departments according to their type of activity.

The Caixa built, maintained and expanded its premises so as to accommodate its



CGD head-office building – central hall. © CGD-DCM.



Tapestries by Júlio Pomar detail. © CGD-DCM.

departments for a long time. A whole block in the old part of town – from Rua do Ouro to Rua da Conceição, S. Julião and Nova do Almada – was bought to accommodate the deposits department and the CNP.

In order to keep the head offices at Calhariz, the adjacent Palácio Palmela (Palmeira Palace) was acquired and adapted to the existing Palácio Sobral (Sobral Palace), turning the two into a single building.

Its branch network also increased in the mainland and the islands (Madeira and Azores). In the 1980's CGD had 223 agencies. As far as building design was concerned, CGD invited renowned Portuguese and foreign architects who had received various awards throughout their careers (just to name a few):

- António Reis Camelo - *Prémio Valmor (Valmor Prize)*, *Prémio Municipal de Arquitectura (Municipal Award for Architecture)* - 1931, 1942, 1945;
- Carlos Oliveira Ramos - *Prémio Valmor (Valmor Prize)* - 1958;

- Jorge de Almeida Segurado - *Prémio Valmor (Valmor Prize)* - 1958;
- Jorge Ferreira Chaves - *Prémio José Luís Monteiro (José Luís Monteiro Prize)* - 1946;
- Luís Cristino da Silva - *Medalha de Honra da Sociedade Nacional de Belas Artes (Medal of Honour from the National Fine Arts Society)* - 1943, *Prémio Valmor (Valmor Prize)*, *Prémio Municipal de Arquitectura (Municipal Award for Architecture)* - 1944, *Prémio Nacional de Arte do Secretariado Nacional de Informação (National Prize of the National Information Secretariat of Art)* - 1961;
- Porfírio Pardo Monteiro - *Prémio Valmor (Valmor Prize)* - 1923, 1928, 1929, 1930, 1938 e 1940, *Menção Honrosa (Honourable Mention)* - 1930, *Prémio Municipal de Arquitectura (Municipal Award for Architecture)* - 1947;
- Raul Lino da Silva - *Prémio Valmor, Prémio Municipal de Arquitectura (Municipal Award for Architecture)* - 1930, *Prémio José de Figueiredo (José de Figueiredo Prize)* - 1948;

- Tertuliano Lacerda Marques - *Prémio Valmor (Valmor Prize)* - 1921.

Its sustainable growth needed a venue to which central services could be transferred from the various dispersed buildings and joined together in a single one. This ambitious project aimed at substantiating Lisbon's image and urban value through developing a paramount architectural landmark.

CGD's current head office building is located in an area that was on the outskirts of Lisbon until the end of the 20th century. This area had some rural estates and its development changed the area's urban design. Between 1908 and 1981 this plot was the site of the Companhia das Fábricas de Cerâmica Lusitânia factory (founded by Sylvain Bessière). It was one of the city's development hubs due to the existence of the necessary raw material (clay) which supplied the factory. Various municipal urban construction works, such as the construction of Avenida João XXI, led to the company's estate expropriation in 1964 and subsequent production came to a closure in 1971.

On 7 July 1981, the Board of Directors of CGD, presided over by Alberto Alves de Oliveira Pinto, asked the minister of Finance for the permission to acquire the estate of said factory. The government accepted the request on 13 August (Resolution number 185), and the acquisition took place on the 26 August.

The public tender process included the following pre-requisites: *representativeness* (an architectural landmark reflecting both tradition and future); *habitability* (environmental conditions); *flexibility* (readjusting to its evolution); *security* (for users and external agents); and *management* (minimising costs); The criteria highlighted the institution's clear effort to adjust its structure to its growing activity, as well as to the growing number of human resources, both in terms of quantity and quality.

The blueprint for the new venue was handed to the Municipality in 1985. It was approved and licensed in 1986 and soon the preliminary architecture and specification projects were developed. A preliminary public tender was also carried out for the earthworks, foundations, structures, water probing and collection works that started in 1987. While the works were still ongoing, central services were relocated to other new buildings because the living space had become scarce in the former ones – e.g. the head-office at Calhariz and Rua do Ouro. In July 1982 the new Centro Clínico de Lisboa (Medical Center of CGD) began operating from a modern 5-storey building at Rua da Emenda. The architect Arsénio Luís Raposo Cordeiro designed the building and its foundation stone was laid on 15 July 1987, along with a sarcophagus containing a parchment document recording the beginning of the works and some coins minted that same year.

This brand new complex would include the central services and many others, namely the scientific and cultural departments, most of which were related to patronage or similar programmes. In 1988 CGD joined Lisbon's municipality in funding the reconstruction of Chiado after the great fire, awarding various accolades, and supporting conferences or books for libraries. As far as social responsibilities were concerned the new Caixa building encompassed a wide range of revolutionary elements that would allow better support to the various cultural programmes and events.

The Direction relocated to the building on Avenida João XXI on 14 March 1994.

As far as its structure is concerned the building is divided into three main blocks: Eastern, Central and Western. It has several departments: Direction and Central departments, social and cultural activities (library, leisure, sports and commercial, restaurants, gardens), Medical Centre, Central Agency, companies from the CGD group, and Culturgest. As far as the types of finishing used in the facades are concerned we can find: Outdoors – limestone, pre-moulded white concrete, glazed roof tiles, rooftop gardens, aluminium and glass window frames; Indoors – limestone and moleanos, metal-board ceilings, synthetic materials, removable elevated carpet pavements, agglomerated and thermo-laminated walls, staircases/toilets/halls with stone and ceramic mosaic.

The interior design of the building's public areas display several art works: tapestries by Júlio Pomar and Júlio Resende; tile panels by Graça Morais and Sá Nogueira; an arched roof with glazed mosaics by Eduardo Nery; sculptures by Lagoa Henriques, Ascânio Monteiro, Clara Menéres and Fernando Conduto; and paintings by António Charrua.

Here are some figures concerning the building's infrastructure:

- Areas: 38,000m² plot, 22,850m² implantation, 15,150m² gardens, 205,200m² construction, 173,600m² living area, 15 storeys (from -6 to +9), 4,500 residents, 1,000 parking spaces, 245 toilets and showers;
- Water: 12,000m³ water monthly consumption, 62km of water pipes;
- Fire: 103 fire zones, 6,500 sprinklers, 5,000 fire detectors, 471 fire doors;
- Motorised document transportation: 4,5km trail, 205 containers, 67 stations, 1,500 daily shipments;
- Security: 66 turn-styles, 420 CCTV cameras;
- Electricity: 3GWh electricity monthly consumption, 3 transformer stations with 16MVA of global power, 6 power stations with a global power of 5,5MVA, 13 UPS with a global power of 3.9MVA, 2,250km of wiring, 62km of wiring paths, 400 switchboards, 52,000 electricity devices;

- Air conditioning: 1,200.000m³ of treated air, 50 units of treated air, 10 chillers, 8 heat pumps, 110km of air pipes, 60km of water pipes, 203 switchboards, 16km of linear diffusers, 16,000 measurement points;

- Elevators: 58 lifts, 6 escalators, 11 swing stages;

- Centralised vacuum equipment: 3,7km of pipelines, 320 vacuum sockets;

- Communications: 5,000 phones, 5,100 personal computers;

- Sound diffusion: 6,500 loudspeakers, 503 amplifiers;

- Solar thermal power plants: 1,600m² of solar collectors, 158 collectors, 1GWh annual production;

- Centralised technical management: 25,000 information points;

- Water reserves: Supplies-350m³, Fire-450m³, Air conditioning-220m³, Kitchens-75m³.

It is also important to point out the establishment of *Culturgest* – Gestão de Espaços Culturais (Management of Cultural Spaces) – in 1993. The goal of this society was to manage cultural venues, and promote and develop cultural, artistic, and scientific events at the head office building. At the beginning of July 1993 the opening of the new central agency/head office took place at the new building and all central departments were relocated by the end of the first quarter of 1994. The cultural venues managed by Culturgest opened in October, including two halls (one with 605 seats and another with 180 seats), exhibition galleries, a documentation centre, a media library, and a European information centre.

The media library opened in February 1994, offering a multimedia computerised library, a wide range of information services, including access to a European Information Centre implemented in cooperation with the European Commission.

By the end of October 1994 every department was fully operational at the new building followed by the remaining Caixa Group companies by the end of the year. Over the



Culturgest Auditorium – Rodrigo Peixoto photo.

years CGD has been involved in a vast array of patronage programmes, encompassing different fields of intellectual and artistic creation and production, both supporting education, scientific research, social solidarity and sports projects from various institutions and through Culturgest.

Culturgest promotes several music, dance, theatre and essay theme schemes, and initiated the 20th century opera programme as well. As far as exhibitions are concerned Culturgest also continues to introduce new creations and artists whose contributions to the emergence of 21st century art movements are significant.

In its capacity as role model, CGD fosters sustainable development criteria based upon the company's values and culture, thus resulting in a profitable financial company that is both socially fair and generates sustainability initiatives.

*'Our commitment towards the Community is based on the unshakable struggle for upholding ethics and respecting the laws that regulate our activity, abiding by good conduct and practices codes, respecting our co-workers, (...) with ongoing and committed support to social and cultural activities (...)'*¹.

Given this strategic priority, the goal of CGD is to be number one in sustainable financial activity (abiding by international practices concerning economic, social and environmental activities), fostering responsible

behaviour and providing positive financial products for economic activities (namely in the field of renewable energies).

This guideline can be found in the *Plano Estratégico do Grupo CGD* (CGD Group Strategic Plan), 2011-2013, in which the focus of the institution is the *'(...) banking industry operations ensuring both sustainability and competitiveness (...) substantiating the CGD sustainability strategy, allocating a wide range of voluntary commitments (...) organised according to axes defined by its Sustainability Policy: Responsible Banking, Future Promotion, Environment Protection, Human Asset Management, and Involvement with the Community.'*².

Within the scope of its *Programa Corporativo de Sustentabilidade* (Sustainability Corporate Programme) we would like to stress the implementation of: *Princípios do Global Compact* das Nações Unidas (Principles from the UN Global Compact); *Sistema de Gestão Ambiental* (Environmental Management System), ISO 14001:2012; *Código de Conduta* (Conduct Code); *Declaração sobre Políticas de Sanções* (Declaration on Sanctions Policies); *Gestão de Risco* (Risk Management); international norms against corruption and money laundry.

As a response to climate change *Programa Carbono Zero* (Zero Carbon Programme) operates in various fields: quantifying greenhouse gas emissions; reducing

energy consumption; emissions balancing (sustainable development projects); low carbon financial solutions; raising awareness (adoption of better practices).

We would like to point out various environmental programmes: *Programa Caixa Carbono Zero 2010*; *Floresta Caixa* (preservation of the native forest); *Programa Ambiental das Nações Unidas para o Sector Ambiental – UNEP FI*, by *Banca&Ambiente – Financiar o Ambiente em Portugal 2009-2011*; *Carbon Disclosure Project Ibéria 125* (information on greenhouse gases and strategies to tackle climate change); *Calculadora de Carbono da CGD* (individual carbon footprint); *Programa Nova Geração de Cientistas Polares* (promotion of polar science in Portugal).

Within the scope of the energy efficiency programme, between 2006 and 2014 CGD achieved a 28% electricity consumption decrease through the installation of photovoltaic microgeneration units in 10% of its branches (1,450 panels with an annual production of 430,000kWh). CGD was the first bank to produce 'clean energy' in Portugal, thus preventing an annual emission of 200 tons of CO₂.

Its Thermal Solar Power Plant located at the head office – the largest ever installed in an office building in Portugal – is the most visible measure taken to tackle the reduction of CO₂ emissions and to provide a source of renewable energy, thus minimising national energy dependence. It occupies an area of 1,600m² with 158 collectors and produces 1,000MWh every year, allowing 70% energy savings of the building's water heating apparatus. It represents an annual reduction of 500 tons of CO₂, as well as power savings equivalent to the consumption of 2,000 people, and the preservation of oxygen equivalent to the amount released by 170,000 trees.

The installation of this power plant was decisive in receiving the *Prémio EDP – Energia Eléctrica e Ambiente 2008* award – a competition whose goal is to reward companies that use a distribution power network and that optimise energy efficiency while respecting the environment.

Following its centennial tradition – and apart from its financial role as banking entity – CGD plays a major role in promoting cultural events and sustainability projects, well depicted by the head office building itself. ●

1 CGD Sustainability Report 2009.

2 CGD Sustainability Report 2013.

The headquarters of the National Bank of Romania. History and architecture

Brîndușă Costache and Nadia Manea

For the past 125 years, the headquarters of the National Bank of Romania have been located at the same address in Bucharest: number 25 Lipscani Street. Today, the Bank operates in three monumental buildings: the Old Palace, at number 25 Lipscani Street, the New Palace, at number 8 Doamnei Street, and the Chrissoveloni Palace, at number 16 Lipscani Street. The first two buildings stand back-to-back, as part of the same architectural complex. The two streets are part of the oldest commercial area in Bucharest, lying on the left bank of the Dambovitza river, near the Princely Court of the 15th to 18th century.

The presence of the Prince and His Court attracted merchants, the development of trade and the building of many inns which offered shelter for people, commodities, and animals used for transportation. Lipscani - the name of the main street - is actually derived from the word lipscan which means a merchant trading in commodities brought from Lipsca, the name then used by the inhabitants of Bucharest for the town of Leipzig.

The National Bank of Romania was established in 1880 as a 'discount and circulation bank' and was the result of the modernisation of the Romanian society in the late 19th century, and the consequence of the national independence achieved after the War of 1877 - 1878. In the first few months, the headquarters of the Bank were located in the University building, where the Senate had rented several rooms. But this was an improper location, and in July 1880, the General Council of the National Bank decided to temporarily relocate the headquarters in the building of the Rural Credit Bank, at number 21 Colței Street¹, which had a vault and enough space to fit the equipment required to print banknotes. The National Bank of

Romania continued to operate in the building for ten years (between 1880 and 1890). Meanwhile, the officials of the Bank decided to erect a new, modern, and monumental building to be used as headquarters for the benefit of contemporaries and future generations alike.

The actions of the National Bank were in line with the urban planning ideas implemented by the Bucharest City Hall in the last decades of the 19th century. The old commercial area experienced a 'burst' of new constructions, including a new street pattern and higher buildings, both public (the University) and private (hotels), with modern design and functionality. All experts are of the opinion that 'the Romanian culture's Westernised approach, particularly French, allowed the penetration and spreading of Western architectural styles'. The process was supported first of all by 'the presence in Romania of numerous foreign architects, who were entrusted with the design of most of the new representative public buildings', as well as by the work of the first Romanian architects educated in France, Italy and Germany.² As a result, even the most famous old inns³, fell under picks and shovels, clay roads or roads paved with oak beams ... were replaced by cobbled streets covered with gravel and asphalt.⁴

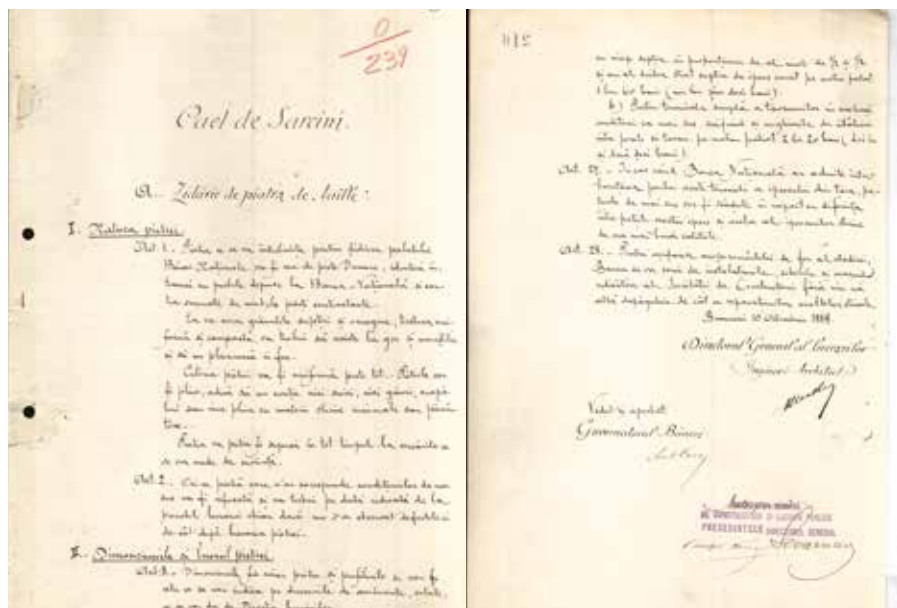
Another inn, the Prince Șerban Inn, the biggest and most famous of old Bucharest became the National Bank of Romania Palace. Owned by the Government of Romania since 1863, the inn⁵ was sold to the National Bank for 800,000 lei in October 1881⁶. The sale was approved by the Parliament of Romania in February 1882, as announced by Governor Ion I. Câmpineanu to the NBR General Council of 26 February 1882. On the same occasion, the Council resolved that 'the Governor and the Chairman of the



One of the oldest pictures of the headquarters of the NBR. © Collection of NBR Archive.

Council of Financial Controllers (Menelas Ghermani - our note) should visit as soon as possible some of the most important foreign banks, and, after seeing the progress made ... should commission an accomplished architect from abroad to take care of the entire project.⁷

Documents make no clear reference to the actual visit of the two NBR representatives, or the country they visited. Nevertheless, there are clear indications that the visit actually took place and the city of destination was Paris. Both Ion Câmpineanu and Menelas Ghermani were 'absent' from the meetings of the NBR Council almost the entire month of May 1882, as indicated in the minutes of the meeting⁸. Governor Ion Câmpineanu returned on 24 March 1882⁹, and Menelas Ghermani on 31 March 1882. On this later date, the meeting of the NBR General Council took place, 'acknowledging the report of the Governor and the Chairman of the Council of the Financial Controllers, advising the General Council of the manner in which their mandate was accomplished' and 'after hearing the verbal explanations given by the two, the Council approves the agreement concluded with Mr Cassien Bernard and Mr Albert Galeron for a draft design project for the headquarters of the Bank and



Task book regarding the erecting of Lipscaeni Palace: first and the last pages. © NBR Archive.



Lipscaeni Palace during the interwar period. Picture by N. Ionescu ©Library Romanian Academy, FII 1594 87.

would like to congratulate the delegates for the manner in which they accomplished the mandate they had so willingly undertaken'.¹⁰

The two French architects, Cassien Bernard (1848 – 1926) and Albert Galeron (1847 – 1930) enjoyed a good reputation in Paris. Both had graduated from Ecole de Beaux-Arts. While the former inspected the construction works for the Opera in Paris, the latter was already well-known in Bucharest, where he had taken on several jobs.¹¹ In a very short period of time, the two architects completed several different versions of the same draft design project. After reviewing the proposals, the General Council decided that the new headquarters should have their main entrance facing Lipscaeni. The General Council also 'authorised the Governor to ask the architects for the final project and the cost estimate'.¹²

In 1883, the Prince Șerban Inn was being demolished while the design project of the new Palace was being completed and revealed at the National Exhibition of Fine Arts in Paris. Work on the Palace started on 12/24 July 1884 and lasted as long as 1890, although the initial timeline had been set at about two or three years. The delay was due to the Serbian – Bulgarian war (November – December 1885), which prevented the supply of the Rusciuc stone, but also to difficult

tender processes and negotiations for the purchasing of materials and equipment, plus unfavourable weather conditions, particularly during the winter of 1888/1889, which resulted in the construction works being put at a stop for several months. The company in charge of the construction was The Romanian Company of Public Constructions and Works, while Nicolae Cerchez, an engineer and architect, was appointed as lead project manager, with architect Constantin Băicoianu acting as his deputy. Also part of team were Iohan Seewald, draftsman; Albert Seraia, supervisor of concreting works, and Nicolas Pascal, supervisor of construction works.¹³

The materials and equipment originated from Romania (wrought iron, gas lights) and abroad (cement and iron beams from France, copper sheets from Germany, Rusciuc stone from Bulgaria, Carrara marble from Italy, heating equipment from Vienna). In the opinion of experts, 'the structural frame and the materials used were in line with the most modern construction methods of the late 19th century'.¹⁴

In February 1889, 'the construction of the palace was complete, except for parts of the interior decorations. The printing works were already operational'. The year 1889 is displayed on the frontispiece of the

palace in Latin (MDCCCLXXXIX). Relocation to the new palace was completed on 1 June 1890.¹⁵

The design developed by the French architects and brought to life by the Romanian architects and engineers focused on the idea of dedicated areas for the specific operations of the bank. Thus, the interior of the Lipscaeni Palace comprised: a ground floor area opened to the public, where the Discount Office and the cash desks were located, now hosting the NBR Museum; the first floor area dedicated to senior officials, hosting the Board room and the Governor's office, both carefully decorated and furnished, as well as the Governor's suite; the offices of the employees working the bank's seven departments; the basement vault designed for public access and the safekeeping of valuables, the printing works areas, including other amenities. The design was meant to allow access to bank employees and the public while also observing the safety measures aimed at protecting the bank's valuables, taking into consideration the street pattern and the surroundings of the building.¹⁶

The exterior of the palace is built in eclectic French style, with four Corinthian columns, four allegorical characters (Justice, Agriculture, Commerce and Industry)¹⁷



Inside of Lipscani Palace. © Collection of NBR Archive.



The construction site of National Bank of Romania's New Palace. © NBR' Archive.

and two other characters (a man and a female) on the sides of a dormer housing a clock on the main facade.¹⁸

Eugeniu Carada, one of the senior officials of the National Bank, was appointed to closely supervise on behalf of the NBR the design and construction of the Palace in all the six years to completion.¹⁹ The building was subject to several major changes in design. In 1915, the large first floor gallery surrounding the Lobby housing the cash desks was restructured into two large offices. Wood structures were also fitted to separate the new office area from the cash desk area. After the German occupation of 1916-1918, work was resumed, as the NBR needed to comply with the new economic and political realities of Greater Romania.

In 1924, the statue dedicated to the Eugeniu Carada' memory was built on the west corner of the palace. The Lipscani Palace underwent the most significant transformations between the years 1929 and 1930. Thus, the Governor's suite was transformed into offices, and a second floor was added to the three secondary sides of the building, to come to the same level as the facade. All these transformations required complex engineering work. As a result, the Old Palace became more compact and more impressively massive. After the 45 years

of communist regime, when only repair works were conducted, the Lipscani Palace, already one hundred years old, was in great need of significant restoration and refurbishment. The decision of the Board of Directors was made in 2001, and works were carried out between 2005 and 2010.²⁰

One of the most beautiful buildings in Bucharest, as seen by Ion Mincu, a significant representative of Romanian architecture, the Old NBR Palace was the first in a series of monumental buildings to stand for the new and modern Romanian institutions. So it is not by chance that the banking city of Bucharest began its life in the surroundings of the Palace at the start of the 20th century.²¹ Restored and consolidated according to the principles of built heritage, the Lipscani Palace is a category A building, i.e. a historical landmark of exceptional importance.

In the years between the two world wars, the diversification of the duties of the National Bank of Romania in the area of foreign exchange and precious metal supervision required the establishment of new departments, the employment of additional personnel, and the expansion of office areas. Consequently, in 1923, the Bank acquired two buildings in the immediate vicinity of the old headquarters, namely the building formerly hosting the Modern theatre and the

so-called Zaharia building. Then, in 1933, the NBR also acquired the former Chrissoveloni Bank Palace, following the credit institution's bankruptcy²².

In the middle of the second interwar decade, the NBR was operating three different buildings, which, even though located close enough to one another, were not adequately serving the purposes of the bank. Wishing to put an end to all the shortcomings of the three separate buildings, the officials of the bank were planning to erect a new building that should achieve all the intended functional purposes of the old building. The two buildings, old and new, were to be surrounded by public areas (streets, squares, etc.), providing for enhanced security. To this end, some legal obstacles regarding ownership of the surrounding buildings had to be overcome. In 1938, the members of the Bucharest City Council recognised the necessity of expanding the headquarters of the NBR, and included in the city's urban plan the project for widening or changing the pattern of the streets in the immediate vicinity of the bank, as well as the project for the demolition of some buildings in the area. At the same time, the relevant buildings were declared public buildings and expropriated²³. By March 1939, the National Bank of Romania had paid the purchase price set in the expropriation act,



The New Palace of National Bank of Romania, today. Apud Nicolae Șt. Noica, Liviu Ciulley – un reper, cuvânt înainte de M. Isărescu, București, Editura Vremea, 2011, p. 7.

as well as the damages claimed by former tenants.

Meanwhile, the designs for the New NBR Palace were being drafted by the former chief architect of the bank, Radu Dudescu, with the help of architect Ion Al. Davidescu, a professor of the Polytechnic School of Bucharest, and architects N. Crețoiu, Gh. Nichitovici and G. Vidrașcu, all employees of the bank²⁴. In designing the project, architect Radu Dudescu considered other buildings of similar size and importance constructed in Europe at the same time. While on a research trip, the NBR's chief architect visited the Palace of the League of Nations in Geneva, the construction site for the expansion of the headquarters of the Banque de France in Paris, as well as the future headquarters of the Reichsbank in Berlin, and the National Bank of Bulgaria in Sofia. The architect Radu Dudescu was interested in everything that was new in the field of constructions at the time, and some of the novelties were to be included in the design of the New Palace, such as flexible office areas, air conditioning, enclosed wiring, etc.

The final version of the design project for the New NBR Palace was discussed and approved in the Board meeting held in the autumn of 1940. The project included 2 basements housing the NBR vault, a bomb shelter able to protect around 1,800 persons, the archive storage, the boiler and water supply room, the fuel tanks, the garage, etc. The mezzanine would house a canteen and locker room for the bank employees, located

near the entrance on one side of the building. The ground floor would be open for the public and had rich decorations. The two rows of cash desks stood on the sides of the main lobby and reminded of the shape and size of the Old Palace. Floors one to four would be used as offices; the offices were more austere, but nevertheless fitted with the latest technological equipment. The reception area and the offices of senior officials were on the fifth floor. The original design had 6 floors, but the last floor was eliminated in the subsequent versions. The last two floors were smaller in size than the others and left room for a terrace which gives this 1930's style building a touch of elegance. The ground floor and the first floor connected the old and new palaces²⁵.

The facades of the building were in line with the architectural style of the bank's Old Palace and the central area of the city of Bucharest. The exterior decorations were classic, reiterated the motive of the Corinthian columns, and had the same height and stone finishing²⁶.

The New NBR Palace was built by the SAR National Construction Company (SONACO) managed by engineer Liviu Ciulley, one of the most famous construction companies in Bucharest at the time. Construction works started on 2 May 1940, the date when SONACO took over the land where the New Palace would stand²⁷.

According to the initial schedule, the structure of the building was supposed to be ready by the end of 1941 or the beginning

of 1942. The difficulties encountered in purchasing materials and the impossibility to find workers due to the start of the war prevented the timely completion of the project. The two basements had been finished by the end of 1940, but work slowed down in the years to come. Three years later, the building also had a mezzanine, part of the ground floor, and one third of the underground garage.²⁸ In February 1943, the financial burden of the war forced the Bucharest officials to limit construction works. In their effort to obtain approval to continue construction and obtain the necessary materials, the bank's officials cited the importance of the institution whose building was being erected, as well as the fact that the two basements of the New Palace were the safest bomb shelters in Bucharest²⁹ as well as the safest earthquake shelters, since the New Palace was the first building in Romania whose structure was earthquake resistant.³⁰ The military events to later unfold proved the truthfulness of the above statements. In April 1944, when Romania was an ally of Germany and Bucharest was bombed by Allied aircraft, only the first floor and the ground floor of the new NBR headquarters were damaged³¹. Several months later, after the arrest of Marshal Ion Antonescu, the leader of the Romanian State until 23 August 1944, and after the newly-appointed Government decided that Romania should join the coalition of the United Nations, Bucharest was the target of German air strikes. Seeing the danger, the new Government found refuge in



Image from inside of New Palace of National Bank of Romania. Apud Nicolae Șt. Noica, Liviu Ciulley – un reper, cuvânt înainte de M. Isărescu, București, Editura Vremea, 2011, p. 74.

the shelter of the New Palace of the National Bank of Romania, where it continued to operate with only short interruptions between 24 and 30 August 1944³². The German missiles destroyed the streets surrounding the Bank, but the Bank's building was undamaged. Thus, the unfinished National Bank building was already making history.

The years to come were also not easy on construction works, due to political turmoil. The construction site of the New Palace was still open by the middle of the 1960's. In line with the changes undergone by the Romanian society at the time, the Marmi Company, which was initially appointed to line the interior of the building with marble, was named Sovromconstrucția, Fabrică pentru prelucrarea pietrei (Sovromconstruction, Stone Processing Factory) in 1949. The company was a Soviet and Romanian joint venture, where the Soviets participated due to the German property they received as war reparations³³.

The delivery of stone from Vratsa, Bulgaria, showed the changes occurred in the relationships between the two countries. While in 1941, the first stone shipments to Romania were settled by virtue of the clearing agreement signed between Romania and Bulgaria, five years later, in 1946, when the lining of the facades was resumed, the stone needed for the exterior finishing was delivered against 92,000 bottles for lemonade³⁴. We may say that the construction of the New NBR Palace ended in 1955, when the ceilings of the ground floor and first floor were

decorated. But at that time the building no longer belonged to the National Bank of Romania. Starting with 1950, when most of the interior finishing and the exterior lining of the New Palace had been completed, several bank departments began to relocate to the New Building, but in January 1953, few years after the National Bank became the property of the Romanian State under the subordination of the Ministry of Finance, the latter moved its headquarters to the New NBR Palace³⁵, while the issuing institution was forced to limit its operations to the boundaries of the Old Palace.

At the beginning of the 1990's, the building now known as the New NBR Palace became, as originally intended, the headquarters of the central bank of Romania, along with the first palace of the issuing institution. Today, the two buildings are not only the image of the National Bank of Romania, but also the image of the changes which took place in the Romanian capital starting with the end of the 19th century. ●

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to contemporary 'supermarkets' and 'business centres', but they also served as bomb shelters for the population, and arenas for political negotiation among great powers in the region and intelligence units. 'Exchangers, the bankers of those times' were there to give out sometimes unreasonable expensive loans and to perform foreign exchange transactions (Tudor Dinu, *Bucureștiul fanariot* (Bucharest in Phanariot Times), vol. I, Bucharest, Humanitas Publishing House, 2015, p. 94).

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The Central Bank of the Russian Federation

12 Neglinnaya Street, Moscow

The main building of the Central Bank of the Russian Federation is a vivid example of late 19th century civil construction. The central building's facade overlooking Neglinnaya Street has become a visiting card of the Russian banking system.

From 1728, the territory, on which the building is located, belonged to Artemy Petrovich Volynsky, a prominent nobleman during the reign of Empress Anna Ioannovna. His heirs eventually completed the construction of the estate ensemble. A park was laid out on both sides of the Neglinnaya River and ponds were set up on its left bank. Here, a two-storey building of the Moscow office of the State Bank was built under the prominent architect Konstantin Bykovsky in 1890-1894, following the transfer of land to the Moscow office of the State Bank. The building has mainly retained its appearance to this day.

The building's main facade is decorated with exquisite ornamental stucco and sculptural depictions of allegorical figures, symbolising agriculture, industry and trade performed. These were designed by sculptor Alexander Opekushin, the creator of the famous monument to Russian poet Alexander Pushkin in Moscow.

The entrance to the building is located in its central part and leads to a spacious hall with a wide staircase.

The premises have mainly maintained their original appearance. The plinths of the hall are made of marble and the same material was used in the column shafts in niches and in galleries.

The central staircase leads to the first-floor gallery. The building's side parts on the first floor previously housed visitors as well as the offices of departments.

The front staircase is located adjacent to the first-floor gallery. The enclosures of its flights of stairs are decorated with balustrades. The original illuminating equipment – wall lamps and cast-iron floor lamps



Moscow Office of the State Bank. © Public Communication Division of the Bank of Russia.

mounted on pedestals near the central staircase – have been well preserved to this day.

The building's second floor was designated for the bank's main offices. A Board Conference Room was located at one end of the hall. Its high windows overlook Neglinnaya Street. The vaulted ceiling and the walls at the hall's end were made using the Grisaille technique. At present, this space accommodates a Conference Room of the Bank of Russia Board of Directors.

The governor's office was originally located to the left of the Conference Room. It was finished with stained oak and decorated with carved furniture and a chimney.

The second floor's vaulted main 'nave' accommodated spacious and light corridors designated for the reception of clients. Bank clerks sat behind wooden counters installed between the hallway's columns in order to receive visitors. The side 'naves' accommodated the offices of different departments.

In 1908-1910, the building was extended from the courtyard. Two structures were added under the prominent architect Illarion Ivanov-Shitz in order to accommodate operating halls surrounded by galleries and illuminated by large lantern like light fixtures, specially installed in the ceilings.

After the 1917 October Revolution, the building housed the Moscow office of the RSFSR People's Bank. In the early 1920s, the RSFSR People's Bank was abolished and until the autumn of 1921 the building accommodated a cash desk of the Central Budget and Settlement Department of the People's Commissariat for Finance.

After the RSFSR State Bank was established in October 1921, the building housed the Bank's Board and its Moscow office. In July 1923, the RSFSR State Bank was reorganised into the USSR State Bank. Before the USSR State Bank was abolished in 1991, the building accommodated its Board.



Front Staircase. Designed by K.M. Bykovsky.



Conference Room of the Bank of Russia Board of Directors.



Public Events Hall. Designed by I.A. Ivanov-Shitz.

In 1927-1929, two six-storey blocks were erected from the building's northern and southern sides under the architect Ivan Zholtovsky. These blocks were to overlook Neglinnaya Street. Connected with the main building, the new blocks formed the front courtyard.

The monumental blocks are a vivid example of the architecture of the late 1920s. Their exterior and interior design includes elements of the Italian Renaissance: exquisite columns and pilasters with sumptuous capitals, diverse vaulted ceiling systems and thin facade linings. The original space and the layout of the blocks have been preserved to this day and the interiors of their main staircases have not changed.

Since 1992, the compound of buildings in Neglinnaya Street has accommodated the divisions of the Bank of Russia head office. By decision of the Bank of Russia Board of Directors, renovation and capital repairs were carried out in the building of the former Moscow office of the State Bank in 1999-2002. During these works, architectural ornaments were restored, the flooring, wooden coverings, roofing and utility networks were replaced and the building's load-carrying structures were reinforced. New offices and workrooms were set up on the first floor and temporary partitions were removed on the second floor.



*Entrance Hall of the North Building. Designed by I.V. Zholtovsky.
© Public Communication Division of the Bank of Russia.*

During the reconstruction of the main staircase, zinc balusters and enclosures of the second-floor gallery in the form of gryphons were replaced with copies made of copper alloys.

After the repairs, the Bank of Russia had 1,800 square metres of additional useful floor-space at its disposal.

The golden-ochre colour gamma used in the interior design, marble floors, bronze chandeliers and gryphons underline the grandeur of the old architecture.

The compound of the Bank of Russia buildings in Neglinnaya Street is an architectural landmark of Moscow and the most recognisable site of Russia's banking system. ●

Edifice of the National Bank of Serbia

Sonja Jerković, Saša Ilić and Vladimir Bulajić

Centuries long Ottoman rule and several decades of armed and diplomatic struggle for the national liberation of Serbs in the Pashalik of Belgrade finally came to an end in July 1878 following the decision of the Congress of Berlin. Having gained full sovereignty, independence of the State and international recognition, Serbia joined the ranks of European countries in the modern era.

Parallel with the national liberation struggle, efforts were made to organise the state and establish its organs, while at the same time modernizing Serbian society. During the process of remodeling its commercial and financial sectors, it was only logical that the subject of a national central banking institution should be put forward. The first initiatives to establish the national bank came as early as the 1840s, when Serbia was still a principality, and grew louder and more widespread from 1882 onwards, when it was elevated to the rank of a kingdom. The objective was twofold: to resolve huge monetary problems, given that dozens of different currencies were in circulation in Serbia at the time; and to secure a safe and cheap source of loans for businesses. Finally, on 6 January 1883,¹ the National Assembly passed a Law on the Privileged National Bank of the Kingdom of Serbia. Owing, primarily, to the initiative of Belgrade tradesmen and their view that founding a bank with domestic capital would be an expression of patriotism, the subscription of shares was financed exclusively with the money of Serbian citizens. The needed amount of the founding capital was raised by the end of February 1884, and the first governor was appointed in early March. The operating licence was obtained by the end of that month. Once the location was secured, offices were rented for a private



Edifice of the Privileged National Bank of the Kingdom of Serbia, around 1890, signature: ANB 19 (Collection of Photographs).

loan facility in Belgrade and qualified staff were recruited. The National Bank began to operate on 2 July 1884.

The National Bank not only performed important tasks in terms of corporate lending but was licensed to print money. Hence the subject of constructing a designated building arose quickly. Documents record that a building was required which would respond to its needs in every aspect, for years to come. As soon as 1886, the National Bank purchased a lot in the centre of Belgrade, at 12 Dubrovačka Street (today's Kralja Petra Street), only a few dozen metres from the main commercial artery of the Serbian capital, Knez Mihailova Street. The following year, 1887, as documented in a report of the Board of Directors, a decision was made to build an edifice according to the design of Konstantin A. Jovanović, an architect from Vienna.

The son of Anastas Jovanović, a renowned Serbian photographer and superintendent of the Royal Court under

Prince Mihailo Obrenović, Konstantin Jovanović was born in 1849 in Vienna, where his father lived after the change of dynasty in Serbia. Having finished primary school and high school (Realschule) in Vienna, he was admitted to the Institute of Technology in Zürich. With his unswerving devotion to the Renaissance, renowned German architect Gottfried Semper was pivotal to Jovanović's formation as an artist. Hence, after graduation in 1870, he spent some time in Italy, studying Renaissance art first-hand.

Jovanović's architectural engagements spanned across three countries: Austro-Hungary, Serbia and Bulgaria. Little is known about his construction activities in the dual monarchy, while in Bulgaria he designed projects for a number of buildings, of which the edifice of the National Assembly in Sofia stands out particularly. This building, together with the National Bank edifice in Belgrade, represents the crowning achievement of Jovanović's architectural expression.

¹ All dates in the paper prior to February 1919 are given according to the Julian calendar, which was then in official use in Serbia. In the 19th century, the Julian calendar was 12 days behind the Gregorian, and 13 days in the 20th century.



Edifice of the Privileged National Bank of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, 1925, signature: ANB 19 (Collection of Photographs).

In addition to his incontestable qualifications and enviable reputation, his choice for the architect of the building that would house Serbia's central banking and issuing institution was no doubt partly influenced by his father's friendship with the Bank's management and the then governor Filip Hristić.

The construction of the National Bank's edifice began in the spring of 1888. The appointed contractors, Jirásek and Kraus from Szeged, agreed to finish the construction by 1 September 1889. However, complex works on the interior required more time and the building was not completed until January, with employees moving in on 15 March 1890. Aware of the edifice's architectural value for Belgrade, the Bank's management of the time recorded: The National Bank now has a home which, with its sturdy materials and manner of construction, its layout and its architectural beauty, and all other qualities, fully corresponds to its needs and reputation.

The site on which the edifice was erected was irregular in shape; therefore Jovanović opted for a corner solution. The monumental edifice comprises a basement, a ground floor, two floors and a loft. The façade is of artificial rock, which through the use of different ornaments reveals a tripartite horizontal division – from the elaborate ground floor to less ornate upper floors. Window decorations are also tempered going up, with gradual simplification of ornaments and a calmer rhythm. Of particular interest is the design of the corner façade, which is interrupted by a formal entrance to the building.

Aiming to leave the strongest possible artistic imprint on the building that he designed and to testify to his personal friendship with members of the Bank's management, Jovanović also designed the interior and all its details, including doors and windows, stucco decoration and furniture.

The central part of the building is comprised of the richly decorated official hall,

bordered by the colonnade, decorated by mural paintings and a stained-glass ceiling. The hall contains an imperial staircase with gilt candelabra, dominated by a gilt female bust symbolising Serbia. This bust – a detail from the monument to Kosovar heroes in Kruševac which represents the memory of fallen heroes in the most momentous Serbian medieval battle – the Battle of Kosovo of 1389. The bust was created by the renowned Serbian sculptor Đorđe Jovanović.

Konstantin Jovanović's remarkable efforts did not go unnoticed. In the year when the building was completed, Jovanović received an important state decoration – the third-class Saint Sava Order.

After the First World War, the National Bank continued with its mission in much different circumstances. The scope of its operations was broadened due to the territorial enlargement of the country, following the unification of Yugoslav countries and lands into the new Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. Renamed into the Privileged



Official hall (modern view), signature ANB 24 (Digital Archives).



Official hall, wall painting & decoration, signature ANB 24 (Digital Archives).

National Bank of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, the Bank took on new tasks, such as the liquidation of branches of the Austro-Hungarian Bank.

At the first meeting of the General Board, held on 3 January 1921, the subject of the expansion of the Bank's building was raised. Vice-Governor Marko Stojanović remarked that office space was insufficient to accommodate the Bank's clerks, and the vaults were too small to hold all the cash so that bundles of cash were heaped high in treasury corridors. The Board decided to launch the initiative to construct an annex to the building. A request was then sent to architect Konstantin Jovanović to prepare plans for the construction of an annex that would not impair the current appearance.

After negotiations with architect Jovanović, who lived in Zürich at the time (where he died on 25 November 1923, before the annex was constructed), and after he agreed to prepare the plan, the Board for the Construction of the Bank's Building was established at the Bank. The first meeting of the Board was held on 23 December 1921. The Board accepted Jovanović's proposal for the extension of the building on the corner of the streets Kralja Petra and Cara Lazara and the construction of a square edifice flanked by Trgovačka (present-day Ivan-begova) and Gračanička Streets. After preparations were made, at the 14th meeting of the Board of

Directors held on 11 April 1922, Vice-Governor Marko Stojanović proposed that a charter illustrating all milestones in the Bank's history should be walled in on the occasion of laying the cornerstone. The Board led all activities relating to the construction – from the selection of contractors to the procurement of construction material and construction permits from the Municipality of the City of Belgrade. As Konstantin Jovanović was in an advanced age, the Belgrade architect Aleksandar Janković assumed the task of overseeing the construction.

The construction of an annex lasted for three years – from 1922 to 1925. Finally, the edifice had the appearance of a square building with an inner yard. Although the building consists of two parts – older and newer, the evidence that it was built in stages shows only at the base of the ground floor, i.e. at the two entries and two representative spaces – the official hall with an imperial staircase and the subsequently constructed monumental teller-halls. Although created within almost four decades, the interior of the building is stylistically harmonious and consistent. Its beauty is particularly accentuated by the examples of exceptional artistic craftsmanship in wood, stone, wrought and cast iron.

The National Bank's building is one of the highest achievements of Serbian academic architecture and the best example of

Neo-Renaissance architecture. It is one of the most monumental edifices in Belgrade, not only for the epoch in which it was erected but nowadays as well.

Despite the tumultuous decades that followed, crises, upheavals and wars, social revolution, political and economic discontinuities, the National Bank's building has remained one of the rare edifices whose original appearance and purpose has been well preserved. ●

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Buildings of central banks in Slovakia in historical perspective

František Chudják

Although Národná banka Slovenska is a relatively young central bank (existing since 1 January 1993), the history of central banking in present-day Slovakia goes back to the early 19th century. The first central bank that kept monetary developments under control in our territory was the Austrian National Bank established in 1816. In 1878, the Bank was transformed into the Austro-Hungarian Bank, which established five branches in the territory of Slovakia. The first branch was opened in Košice on 21 July 1879; the second in Bratislava on 25 August 1879. The first branches of the Austro-Hungarian Bank had no premises of their own; they operated in leased buildings. In 1879, the Košice branch leased a building from the local citizens Július and Rudolf Mauer in the Main Street and the Bratislava branch leased premises from the Industrial Bank in Laurinska Street.

Subsequent to the approval of the third banking privilege in 1899, the management of the Austro-Hungarian Bank decided to expand the branch network. Thus, a branch was also opened in Banská Bystrica in 1900 and in Nitra in 1901. In 1900, the Austro-Hungarian Bank started to build office buildings for its branches across the monarchy. The buildings of all branches in Slovakia were designed by Jozef Hubert, an architect from Bratislava living and working in Budapest. His first project was the building of the Nitra branch at 9 Štefánikova Street, erected in 1900–1901. This was a two-storey building with a basement, built exclusively for the needs of the branch and its personnel. The building of the Bratislava branch in Štúrova Street was built in 1901–02 and that of the Košice branch at 10 Roosevelt Street was erected in 1902–03 by Jakab Arpád & Gejza. The building of the Banská Bystrica branch at 4 Štefan Moyzes Square was purchased in 1900. The Žilina branch in Legionárska Street was opened in 1912, to provide banking services to the residents of the economically



Picture 1: Žilina branch in Legionárska Street. © National Bank of Slovakia.

significant Považie region. The building was erected by Karl Lingel & Söhne very quickly, between November 1911 and December 1912. It was imposing and hence belonged to the dominant features of the town. The branch comprised bank premises as well as residential units, with vaults situated on the first floor where money was transported with a lift manufactured by the company of Franz Wertheim in Budapest. The lift had a loading capacity of 300 kg and was the first goods lift installed in Žilina. (Picture 1)

After the birth of the Czechoslovak Republic in 1918, the tasks of a bank of issue were performed temporarily by the Banking Office of the Ministry of Finance, which was responsible for running the entire branch network of the Austro-Hungarian Bank in Czechoslovak territory. After having taken over the individual buildings, the Banking Office had them adjusted or reconstructed, especially the vaults needed for the safe-keeping of money and precious metals. In

the case of the Bratislava branch, a second floor was added to the building in 1921–22. The construction work was carried out by the firm of Matej Blecha from Bratislava. (Picture 2)

The Banking Office of the Ministry of Finance ended its operations on 1 April 1926, when a new legal entity was established: the National Bank of Czechoslovakia [Národná banka Československá – NBČS] as a central bank for the whole republic. NBČS took over the entire branch network of the Banking Office and expanded it still further. In addition to its head office in Prague, NBČS had 34 branches and 136 local offices in 1937, of which 6 branches (Bratislava, Košice, Banská Bystrica, Žilina, Nitra and, from 1993, Ružomberok) and 22 local offices were in Slovakia.

Shortly after its establishment, the National Bank of Czechoslovakia launched a large scale reconstruction programme within its branch network and started to build

new buildings where the need arose. In the history of banking, the first decade of the 20th century and the interwar period can be described as 'the golden age of bank building in Slovakia'. The central bank had several significant buildings erected in that period. Some of them still serve their original purpose and are on the list of national cultural monuments for their architectural and historic value.

In 1932–33, NBČS had a building erected for its Ružomberok branch at 2 Dončova Street. It was a three-storey building comprising banking premises and apartments for the staff. The building was designed by architect Vladimír Fischer of Prague and built by Jozef Peško, a builder from Ružomberok. It was built in modern style based on classical architecture, with its ground-storey façade covered with stone tiles. The façade is divided by large windows and strips of figurative bronze reliefs. The building is an example of early functionalism combined with classical forms and represents a product of interwar architecture in the urban environment of Ružomberok.

The building of the Banská Bystrica branch purchased in 1900 gradually ceased to satisfy the needs of a central bank, especially the vaults. Hence, NBČS decided to have a new imposing building erected at 10 Národná Street. The construction work was carried out by the Slovak-Czech Building Company, Banská Bystrica, according to the design of prof. Ladislav Skřivánek. The architectural design was based on themes from Tuscany, which is a unique phenomenon in our architecture. The building was erected in a very short period of time, from 1930 to 1932. Its exterior and interior features some unusual decorative elements and details. The façade shows the coloured national symbols of Slovakia and the stylised letters 'NBČ'. In the arch-shaped part of the building, there are large oak doors containing 1,932 threads, which symbolise the year in which the building was completed. The door-handles are made of cast copper, in the shape of a lying lion. The exterior decoration is made from natural materials, processed with a deep sense for detail. The interior walls are covered with dark-red marble tiles, as well as the walls in the basement and in the staircase. (Picture 3)

In 1936, the National Bank of Czechoslovakia started to build a new building for

its Bratislava branch. The building's architectural design was made by Emil Belluš, one of the most prominent architects in Slovakia. The building was erected in 1936–38 in a parcel between Jesenského and Gorkého streets with an entrance from Štúrova Street. The main façade faces east. The building's layout was determined by the relatively narrow parcel. The higher wings on the sides of the main façade give this building a monumental character. There is a wide opening between them bounded with a lintel from above, in which a sculpture of the Greek god Hermes was planned to be situated. This plan, however, has remained unfulfilled. The façade is covered with travertine wall tiles, including rough stone tiles in the parterre and smooth stone tiles on the floors. An interesting element is the cassette entrance gate made of stainless steel with grates on its sides. (Picture 4)

The year 1939 saw serious geopolitical changes in Central Europe, which greatly affected Czechoslovakia too. The establishment of the Slovak State under the protection of the German Reich was announced on 14 March 1939. This was followed by the announcement of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia on the following day. The Slovak National Bank [Slovenská národná banka – SNB] was established on 4 April 1939. Two days later, SNB took over the entire branch network of the National Bank of Czechoslovakia in Slovakia. The new building of the Bratislava branch of NBČS at 2 Štúrova Street, which had been built for roughly 30 employees, had to be adapted to the needs of the Slovak National Bank with 300 employees. Since these adjustments proved insufficient, SNB decided to build a new building for its head office – a 'large business palace', designed to become a dominant building of Bratislava, the capital of Slovakia. It was designed as a poly-functional building comprising two parts: banking premises and a theatre. The building was intended to raise the level of cultural life in Bratislava. On the instruction of governor Imrich Karvaš, the building in the Slovak National Uprising Square started to be built in the autumn of 1942. (Picture 9) It was planned to be completed by 1 July 1945 but was actually completed in 1955. The architectural design was produced by the Design Office of Eugen Kramár and Štefan Lukačovič in Bratislava. The construction work was



Picture 2: Bratislava branch. @ National Bank of Slovakia.



Picture 3: Building of NBČS at 10 Národná Street. @ National Bank of Slovakia.

carried out by the firm of J. Petri of Bratislava. The foundation stone of the new building was laid together with a commemorative document and samples of Slovak banknotes and coins. Owing to its monumental character and stylised classical architectural elements, this building is an example of neoclassical architecture. The façade of the bank and the theatre was to be decorated with sculptural elements, which, however, were implemented in a limited range only. The portal of the theatre features the works of sculptor František Draškovič. The artistic decoration of the bank and theatre façade includes coloured leadlight windows with folklore motifs from painter Janko Alexy and wall paintings with the same motifs on the first floor of the theatre and in the foyer.

As a result of the Vienna arbitrage in November 1938, Košice became part of Hungary and thus eastern Slovakia remained without an SNB branch. Hence, the management of SNB quickly decided to open a branch in Prešov, the building of which was erected in 1941–43 according to the design of architect Ján Štefanec of Bratislava. The construction work was carried out by the Tatra building company from Bratislava.

After the restoration of Czechoslovakia in 1945, the National Bank of Czechoslovakia also restored its operations and established a Regional Office for Slovakia with a



Picture 4: Building of NBCS at 10 Národná Street. @ National Bank of Slovakia.

head office in Bratislava. After southern Slovakia had been returned to Czechoslovakia, two branches were opened in Slovakia after the situation had consolidated to some extent: in Košice at the beginning of August 1945 and in Nové Zámky at the end of August 1945.

The National Bank of Czechoslovakia operated until 1950, when it was transformed into the State Bank of Czechoslovakia [Štátna banka československá – ŠBČS], which was established as a united socialist bank for the entire republic. For Slovakia, a Regional Office was established in Bratislava. The State Bank of Czechoslovakia was a large organisation with 66 branches in the territory of Slovakia. At the beginning of its operations, ŠBČS owned more than 200 office buildings in Slovakia which had previously belonged to NBČS, the Postal Savings Bank, and commercial banks. The buildings that ŠBČS no longer needed were granted to state-owned companies, social organisations or to the Communist Party of Slovakia. For example, the palace of Tatra Bank in Bratislava was given to the Czechoslovak Television, the head office of the Slovak Bank to the Association of Czechoslovak-Soviet Friendship, etc. Several ŠBČS buildings were granted to other financial institutions operating in Slovakia, e.g. the building of the Žilina branch built in 1912 by the Austro-Hungarian Bank was given to

the Czechoslovak Commercial Bank, Prague. Some of the buildings, however, were used for inappropriate purposes (as warehouses for example), often changed hands or were neither renovated nor maintained properly so their technical condition deteriorated to such an extent that they had to be pulled down in the end.

In the 1950s, ŠBČS completed several buildings, which had started to be built during World War II. The most significant of these buildings were the banking palace and theatre in Bratislava and the Trenčín branch. The Slovak National Bank decided to open a branch in this significant industrial centre in 1942. The architectural design was produced by the Design Office of Eugen Kramár and Štefan Lukačovič in Bratislava. Owing to the approaching front line, however, the building was erected later in 1946–51 according to the design of Ján Barytus of Trenčín. The characteristic features of the building in Palackého Street are the intersecting massive structural elements, the layout adjusted to the street lines in the Old Town, and the use of stylised historic elements.

In response to the changes in territorial administration in 1960, the State Bank of Czechoslovakia gradually reduced the number of its branches in Slovakia, to 38 plus the main office by the early 1970s. In that period, the Bank started to build several

office buildings, designed in the characteristic style of that era: socialist realism and schematism.

The birth of the Slovak Republic on 1 January 1993 was accompanied by the establishment of its central bank, i.e. the National Bank of Slovakia [Národná banka Slovenska – NBS], which is now part of the Eurosystem (since 1 January 2009). In addition to monetary and foreign exchange problems, Národná banka Slovenska had to tackle the shortage of appropriate premises after its establishment. The Bank had its head office at 2 Štúrova Street in Bratislava, which, despite having been adjusted and reconstructed on several occasions, failed to satisfy the needs of the new central bank. Hence, the management of NBS decided to build a new head office in Imricha Karvaša Street. The winning project of architects Martin Kusý and Pavol Paňák started to be implemented in November 1996. The construction work was carried out by the H-V-Z Association (Hydrostav, Bratislava, Váhostav, Žilina, ZIPP, Bratislava). The new NBS head office was formally opened on 23 May 2002. The building complex has sufficient capacity for approximately 1,000–1,100 employees. With its architectural design, the head office now belongs to the dominant features of the capital city. The architectural composition of the NBS complex is based on the contrast between its massive horizontal part and the fully glazed tower. The lower horizontal part comprises premises for the performance of the Bank's operational functions. The complex also comprises an internal courtyard forming an attractive open space with natural vegetation. The tower building houses administrative offices, a conference hall, and an exhibition room. The load bearing structure is a monolithic reinforced skeleton combined with a system of columns and prefabricated elements. Regarding its technological equipment, the NBS head office is an intelligent building, for it satisfies the strictest energy efficiency requirements, ecological requirements, and requirements concerned the quality of the working environment. The tower building has 33 storeys above ground, whereas the horizontal part has only six storeys. The basement has three levels below ground, including an intermediate level. The tower building is 111 metres high and the total built-up area amounts to 6,272 m². (Picture 5)



Picture 5: Tower Building in Karvasa Street. © National Bank of Slovakia.



Picture 6: Kosice office in NSlovenskej Jednoty Street. © National Bank of Slovakia.

In addition to its head office, the National Bank of Slovakia has five local offices in Slovakia. An interesting thing is that the Banská Bystrica office is still housed in a building which was built in 1932 for NBČS. As a result of frequent organisational changes, the workplaces were often reorganised and relocated. This led to deterioration in the technical condition of the building. The last reconstruction in 1992–95, however, created good environment for the performance of central banking tasks in the years ahead. In terms of technical equipment, the building was modernised but its historical character was preserved in line with the law on the protection of historic buildings and monuments.

Another interesting building of NBS is its Košice office in Slovenskej Jednoty Street, which was opened on 21 March 1996. The building was designed to meet the requirements of the European standard, with well-equipped offices for 110 central bank employees. The project was designed by architects Karol Gregor and Marián Pitka, and the building was erected by Hydrostav Bratislava in two years. (Picture 6)

This brief historic overview indicates that the banks of issue that have been operating in the territory of present-day Slovakia over the past 200 years have contributed to the country's modernisation through their building activities, too. The banks in question built or bought buildings that fitted

into the environment and were impressive enough, in line with the recommendations of the municipal councils concerned and of the competent office for the conservation of historic buildings and monuments. Their buildings were designed by prominent architects, so many of them are now on the list of national cultural monuments for their architectural, artistic and historic value. ●

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Architecture of BBVA. The unique buildings of San Nicolás and Gran Vía 12 in Bilbao

José Víctor Arroyo Martín

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BBVA headquarters. Palacete de San Nicolás in Bilbao. © Archivo Fotográfico del Archivo Histórico BBVA.

Introduction

The prime exponents of bank architecture in Bilbao are the headquarters and outstanding buildings of several banking institutions. Here we focus on two significant buildings that have been closely linked to the urban and economic development of this city.

The plans for the first site were drawn up in 1861 and construction began in 1865, at a time when the city was expanding outwards from its traditional heart. It was therefore sited close to the historic center, when the city was undergoing a boom. The Palacete de San Nicolás, the head offices of BBVA, stands in the square of the same name. This building was built for use as a bank, along neoclassical lines with an architectural style defined by its French influence. This is possibly the oldest place dispensing banking services in Spain, as it opened its doors in 1868 and has continued operating until the present day. Today it is also one of the headquarters of the BBVA Foundation.

Construction began on the second building in 1920. This was also intended for use as a bank, and had a notably neoclassical design but in a more eclectic and flamboyant style than the Palacete de San Nicolás. The new building of 1920, which the Bank had been planning since 1916, has two monumental colonnades on both sides of the entrance arranged in a miter. This building stands in the Gran Vía, the city's financial axis, which in the 20th century saw the installation of all the leading banking institutions as they abandoned the heart of the historic center once and for all.

The Palacete de San Nicolás was designed by the Parisian architect Eugene Lavalley (with two extensions by Severino Achúcarro, although Enrique Epalza is also thought to have been involved in the first). The building at Gran Vía 12 was designed by the architect Pedro Guimón (with a subsequent extension by Ricardo Bastida and Francisco Hurtado de Saracho).

Palacete de San Nicolás, Bilbao.

BBVA Headquarters

As described in the work 'Arquitectura en BBVA: edificios singulares' ('Architecture at BBVA: unique buildings') published in 2003, this is a national monument with five floors and a façade made from stone and brick, occupying a total area of 3,703 square meters. The original architect was the Parisian Eugene Lavalley, who began work some time between 1865 and 1867; it was opened as the Bank's main building in January 1868. The builders were Jamain père et fils. It underwent two extensions in the 19th century, and since 1898 it has had the same exterior appearance as it does today in terms of its structural features.

Background, 1857-1860

The headquarters of what for the rest of the century would become known as the 'Banco de la Villa' or 'city bank' occupied a space in Bilbao that was redrawn in the mid-19th century. This was an area undergoing expansion in Bilbao's historic center, and was the first



Palacete de San Nicolás during the Carlist siege of Bilbao in 1874. © Archivo Fotográfico del Archivo Histórico BBVA.



The large courtyard of the Palacete de San Nicolás, with its monumental proportions and elaborate skylight. © Archivo Fotográfico del Archivo Histórico BBVA.

location of the private office of Don Ambrosio de Orbegoza, the Bank's original general manager. After the 'Semana Grande' festivities, on 24 August, 1857, the Bank opened its doors to the public at number 7 on the street known today as Calle Viuda de Epalza –then called 'Calle de la Estufa' ('stove street'), as this was where the ships' caulkers set up shop.

A little later, on 1 October the same year, the Bank moved its offices to the exchange and main floor of the building at number 22 Calle de La Ribera, the former address of the Chamber of Commerce. The Bank's offices therefore occupied the site on which the idea for its foundation was first conceived in late 1855. The building is no longer standing, but its original site was beside the Escuelas Múgica –still there today– and almost opposite the famous Hanging Bridge described in the song, which was destroyed during a bombardment by the Carlists in the spring of 1874.

Origins of the Palacete de San Nicolás, 1861-1868

The two first venues –adapted for use as business offices– were however small for the 'Banco de la Villa', even though it had just been created. The need to have its own offices –tailored to the Bank's requirements and reflecting its status– was a matter of paramount importance to the administrators. The site had to be centrally located in the city, and such a space was found in the Plazuela de San Nicolás square opposite the church. The site was occupied by a lodge –the city's most luxurious at that time, and deservedly renowned. The deed of sale was signed in Madrid on 31 December 1861, and the vendors were the Marquis of Fuente Pelayo and Count of Montes Claros. The deal included

other estates and properties, ultimately giving rise to interminable lawsuits which continued throughout the 19th century.

The first stone was laid at the corner of El Arenal on 30 May, 1865. According to tradition, gold and silver coins were buried beneath, along with a silver plaque on which were engraved the names of the members of the Bank's Board of Governors, and a certificate signed by all as a testimony to the solemn occasion. Copies of the local newspapers Iru-rak Bat, Villa de Bilbao and Euskalduna were also deposited.

The building was conceived following neoclassical canons with a French influence –which is unsurprising since it was the work of the French architect Eugene Lavalley, and the builders were Jamain père et fils from Bordeaux. It cost the exorbitant sum for that time of 394,000 francs.

The first phase of the building was opened to the public on 7 January 1868, and the Bank's offices were installed in the part that today corresponds to the small courtyard; as although on completion the façade had the appearance we see today, there were still houses in the streets of Fueros and Ascao set into the space between the large courtyard and the cashier services. The Bank has kept its doors open uninterruptedly on this site for almost 150 years to serve the public.

The first extension, 1882-1888

In the 1880s it became necessary to extend the building, a process in which it gained space and artistic value without losing any of its architectural quality, as the stone came from the same quarry in Angoulême used in the original part, accompanied by

limestone from Llodio (Álava) at the base of the building.

For this purpose, on 21 November, 1882 the Bank acquired and demolished the adjoining houses –numbers 1 and 3 in the Calle de los Fueros–, and the first extension was built on part of the site. The building is thought to have been designed by Severino Achúcarro, although it has also been attributed to Enrique de Epalza. This may possibly be due to the fact that he also directed the works, which were carried out by management contract through to the impost line, and the rest under contract. It cost 243,500 pesetas.

The construction works were awarded to Juan Murguio and terminated in late 1886. Owing to municipal requirements, this extension obliged the Bank to finance the opening of a street through the middle, which as compensation was given the name of Calle Banco de Bilbao.

There was a single site remaining between the Bank and El Arenal, which the Bank made repeated and unsuccessful attempts to sell for a number of years. Forced to find a use for it, the Bank erected a substantial building on the same site, which after some years became home to the Hotel Torrón-tegui, one of the most emblematic hotels in Bilbao. Today a modern office building stands on the site.

The last extension, 1898

The end of the century saw the definitive extension of the Bank building, when it attained its current perimeter, delimited by the streets of Ascao, Fueros, Banco de Bilbao, and Plaza de San Nicolás square.

This was possible due to the purchase of the houses on the corner of the streets of Fueros and Ascao.

The works began in the fall of 1898 under the direction of Severino de Achúcarro, and when the new century dawned the building had the appearance we see today, with a floor plan of almost 1,000 square meters, divided into two courtyards illuminated by elaborate skylights, and an attractive mirrored room for board meetings.

This stately building –today the BBVA head office– bears witness to a bank that is both old and young at the same time. Old, because its roots go back to 1857; and young, because in 1999 it arose from the merger between BBV and ARGENTARIA. In total it has almost 160 years' experience,

and has seen the passage of three centuries: the second half of the 19th century, the 20th century and now the 21st. It may even be the oldest site in Spain dispensing banking services to the public without interruption.

The BBVA building at Gran Vía 12 in Bilbao

This emblematic BBVA building is also included in the work mentioned above, entitled 'BBVA architecture...'. This is a monumental building also listed in local inventories of Historic Architectural Heritage of the Basque Autonomous Government and the Provincial Government of Bizkaia. It is located in Gran Vía in Bilbao and its façades are faced in stone, marble and bronze. It occupies a total of 21,786 square meters, and has ten floors plus two underground. It is the work of the architect Pedro Guimón Eguiguren, and was built between 1920 and 1923. The building was refurbished in the 1950s and underwent another more extensive refurbishment 25 years later. Ricardo Bastida and Francisco Hurtado de Saracho were responsible for these modifications.

Planning and construction, 1916-1923

The first transaction of importance took place in 1916, when José Luis Villabaso, the General Director, announced that they had been offered for sale 'a property at number 20, Gran Vía de López de Haro and although it is not fit for use as a building, the site has meets the necessary conditions for the construction of a building destined for use as a Bank'. The Board agreed to authorize Villabaso to initiate negotiations for the purchase on behalf of the Banco del Comercio for a maximum sum of 900,000 pesetas. In the end 875,000 pesetas were paid to the owner, Mr Olávarri.

Some time passed, and by May 1918 four plans had been received for the construction of the new building. The project submitted by the architect Don Pedro de Guimón was finally approved. The foundation and basement works were put out to tender on 20 March 1919, and in May 1920 were awarded to the firm of Ochandiano and Anduiza. The contract for the building works was set at 1,975,502.48 pesetas. In the end, the first stone was laid on 17 January 1920. Building was completed, and on 10 December 1923 the Banco del Comercio and a delegation from the central office of Banco de Bilbao moved to the new building.



Signing the placement of the first stone for the building at Gran Vía 12 in Bilbao. Archivo Fotografico del Archivo Histórico BBVA.

Appropriation for institutional uses, 1936-1941

In those years the Bank was renting out some sections of the building as office space. But with the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War in 1936 it was appropriated for two vital uses by the institutions in those years. On 16 October 1936 the Board announced that the bank had received a verbal request from the Ministry of the Economy of the Basque Government to 'indicate the sale price or the establish a rental price for the building currently occupied by the Banco del Comercio, and it was agreed to make clear to the Ministry that the Bank was not interested in selling the aforementioned building, which would be highly damaging in the current circumstances, and to authorize the Permanent Commission –with regard to the establishment of rent– to take the decision it considers necessary'.

This situation continued until June 1936 when the Nationalist troops entered Bilbao. The Civil Government also used the building as their headquarters. This much can be learned from the minutes of the Board of 26 July 1941, in which it says that 'the transfer of the Civil Government has now taken place, and the spaces which had been enjoyed in usufruct by this institution after the liberation of the city of Bilbao now remain at the disposal of the Bank'.

The lengthy extension, 1942-1957

Once the Civil War was over, in November 1941 the Bank once again returned to the idea of an extension in which to house the Central Administration, which had remained in the Palacete de San Nicolás. It therefore acquired the houses at number 11 and 13 Calle Ledesma (behind the building) and number 14 Gran Vía.

The extension works began in 1950 and took place in two phases. In the first phase, the building was incorporated into the sites created after the demolition of the houses in Calle Ledesma, evacuating the upper floors and installing them elsewhere to be able to continue providing banking services. The second phase incorporated the site at number 14 Gran Vía, whose demolition had been considerably delayed as it took some time to evacuate the neighborhood.

The architect Ricardo Bastida was ultimately unable to oversee his own extension project as he died on 15 October 1953. The architect Francisco Hurtado de Saracho took over the direction of the works.

The façade on Calle Ledesma at that time had the same colonnade as on the façades on Gran Vía and Alameda Mazarredo. However when the building was extended in Gran Vía, the columns in Ledesma were transferred to that façade, plus one that had to be made expressly to complete the total length.



The building at Gran Vía 12 in the 1930s. © Archivo Fotográfico del Archivo Histórico BBVA.



The building at Gran Vía 12 during BBVA's centenary, in around 1957-1960. © Archivo Fotográfico del Archivo Histórico BBVA.

The building works –which lasted from 1950 to 1957– uncovered the first stone laid in 1920, along with the zinc receptacle containing the coins and newspapers of the day. This deposit was supplemented with newspapers from 1957 and once again placed on the miter to the left of the main door.

On Saturday 24 August 1957, 100 years after the opening of the Bank's first office to the public after its foundation three months earlier, the refurbishment of the new site at Gran Vía 12 was officially inaugurated. The banking offices to provide service to the public occupied the first-floor courtyard and the next floor. The following floor contained spaces for the Board of Directors, the Chairman's Office and the General Management, along with the boardroom, the hall-library and the main offices. The Bank's Central Administration services were located on the remaining three floors.

The new site was blessed at 12:30 pm in the presence of numerous members of the public. As the guests arrived they were received by the Chairman –the Count of Arceche–, the General Manager and a group of directors. Also present were leading figures from the world of banking, commerce, industry and shipbuilding, in addition to national and local authorities, of which the most notable were the President of the Spanish Parliament, the Permanent Delegate of the United Nations in Spain, the General Director for Banking and the Stock Exchange and the Deputy Governor of the Bank of Spain, among others.

Description of the building in 1958:

In February 1958, the publication 'Club Bancobao' published an account by Rafael Santamaría, a Bank employee and a correspondent in London, who was vacationing in the city of Bilbao and visited the new building at Gran Vía 12 after its extension. This gives us an insight into its monumental proportions. He praises the profile and the exterior perspective of the building, highlighting the majesty of its towering columns and the elegance of its proportions. He continues in the interior, where 'you walk through the marble in the monumental hall to the operations floor, where numerous employees move between the desks and metal cabinets –all with clean and modern lines– among machines and vortex tubes that relay documents around the space propelled by a system of compressed air'.

'To the right of the doorway is the base of the master staircase, covered in a carpet of spectacular proportions. On different floors, surrounding the courtyard and supported on greenish-colored marble columns contrasting with the reddish ochre of the guardrail and the bronze banister, there are some spacious galleries by way of amphitheaters which house the Bank's different services. Surrounding these galleries are the director's offices'.

The 1976 extension

Until 1976 the building had two basements, the first floor and six others (the last of smaller proportions) with a mansard roof. It contained the Head Office, Central Administration and the Chairman's Office. In that year,

based on a project by Don Francisco Hurtado de Saracho and under his direction, work was begun to cover the interior courtyards and raise a seventh floor, maintaining the same mansard system as on the sixth. After this action, the final in-depth refurbishment took place in 2007-2008 to bring the building from the 20th into the 21st century. ●

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A history of the headquarters of Banco Santander

Teresa Gómez León

One of the most significant buildings in Santander, aside from its cathedral and the Magdalena Palace, is the Santander Bank itself, located at 9-10 and 11-12 on Paseo de Pereda in the most characteristic and bustling area of the Cantabrian capital. However, this unique building which houses the headquarters of the organisation was actually preceded by seven previous headquarters.

By the mid-nineteenth century, Santander's was linked to the close trade relationship that existed with the American colonies through the port of Santander, which saw heavy traffic between Europe and America. The port became the epicentre of the city's economic development and its transformation to rapid modernisation.

Just a few metres from the pier, the main consignees set up their offices, from where they could carry out overseas commercial transactions overseas, and oversee from their large windows the loading and unloading of steamships, whose goods were then transported by rail to the rest of the Peninsula.

In this prosperous environment, a select group of men linked to the business world met one morning in January 1856 at the Commercial Courts. Their goal was to meet the credit needs and increased demands for methods of payment from a growing import and export market. The result was the founding of a bank of issue that shared a name with its city.¹

They first opened their doors on the morning of 20th August 1857, and although the exact location of what was the first headquarters cannot be found in any source, all signs point to it having occupied the corner of the Pombo palatial home, built by the



Current headquarters of Banco Santander on Paseo de Pereda.
© CDIS Centro Documentación de la Imagen Santander.

future Marquis Juan Pombo Conejo², located between Calle del Martillo and the former Calle Colosía (today Calle Atáulfo Argento) just behind where the current headquarters of the bank sit today.³

The bank had to abandon its headquarters on 16 January 1874 and occupy the hold of the tugboat 'Hercules', which became Banco de Santander's second headquarters for several days. It happened during the Third Carlist War: when faced with the fear of a possible occupation of the plaza by the Carlist army, captained by Torcuato Mendi, the bank's Board of Directors rushed to authorize the bank's temporary move, in order to safeguard its funds from the threat of a possible military conflict.⁴

Aside from this anecdotal event, the company remained at the Pombo palatial home for 18 years until the early hours of 28 May 1874, when a fire that began in the storeroom of the Isasia drugstore affected the adjoining building, that of Banco de Santander. They managed to completely evacuate all the funds apart from the archives.⁵ Banco de Santander quickly moved their offices temporarily to what would be their third headquarters, the Toca rooms at 1 Calle Santa Lucia. There, in a function room and lounge area, they remained for 11 days until 8 June 1875, when they moved once again to what would be their fourth and latest headquarter, located in what is now 13 Calle Hernán Cortés, on the corner of Calle del Martillo. This building was also owned by Juan Pombo and built from a design by architect Severiano Cecilia as a housing residence in 1861.

Five years later, another fire that began on 6 October 1880 reached this building and the facilities of Banco de Santander. Through the intervention of the employees, they

1 HOYO APARICIO, Andrés, *De comerciantes y para comerciantes. El Banco de Santander, 1857-1874. [By traders and for traders. Banco de Santander, 1857-1874]* Universidad de Cantabria Press. Santander 2015, p.27-35.

2 MARTÍN-ACEÑA, Pablo. 1857-2007. Banco Santander 150 años de historia [Banco Santander 150 years of history]. Grupo Santander. Madrid 2007, p. 72 Juan Pombo Conejo, formed part of the founding group of shareholders, sat on the first Board of Governors in 1857, and was the first to hold the position of Bank President.

3 SAN EMETERIO, José Higinio. Banco Santander, apuntes para la historia. [Notes on the history of Banco Santander] *Revista El Santander* Issue 7, August 1988, p.25-28.

4 SAN EMETERIO, José Higinio. Op. Cit. p. 25-28.

5 Ibidem.



Sixth headquarters of Banco Santander, rebuilt by Atilano Rodríguez based on plans by Severiano Cecilia. (MARTÍN-ACENA, Pablo. 1857-2007. Banco Santander 150 años de historia [Banco Santander 150 years of history]. Grupo Santander. Madrid 2007).



Seventh headquarters of Banco de Santander at 2 Paseo del Muelle. (MARTÍN-ACENA, Pablo. 1857-2007. Banco Santander 150 años de historia [Banco Santander 150 years of history]. Grupo Santander. Madrid 2007).

managed to rescue some of the cash, goods and other valuables. The iron vault built in the basement managed to protect the securities portfolios and safety deposit boxes.⁶ This disaster forced the Banco de Santander Board of Directors to temporarily seek a fifth headquarters, in a gymnasium owned by Fernando Fernández, located in the house opposite at 1 Calle Daoíz y Velarde, where they remained temporarily until 1881.

Meanwhile, on 3 January 1881, there was recorded at the department of the Commission of Works of Santander Town Hall the order for the reconstruction of the house, block numbers 1 and 3, Calle Vad-Ras, in which Juan Pombo requests the reconstruction of the block on which had been established the 'Banco de Santander' and which in agreement with its architect Atilano Rodríguez, intends to maintain the facades that remain standing and set upright those which have been destroyed in the same way which they were and appear in the plans approved by said Commission and signed by the architect Severiano Cecilia on 9 October 1861, introducing modifications such as

placing iron and glass galleries on the balconies on the West and East facades.⁷ Following the reconstruction the bank returned to this building in September 1881, this time occupying a larger space with the addition of a mezzanine.

Years later in 1898, the Board of Directors decided to move all its offices to the premises which they had acquired at 2 Paseo del Muelle, with the aims of providing Banco de Santander with a larger, more public and more prestigious location, placing it in the main artery of the city's financial and commercial activity.

The building of its seventh and penultimate headquarters - still standing today at 2 Paseo de Pereda - was built from ashlar and had a ground floor, mezzanine and three stories with matching French windows, which opened onto wide balconies surrounded by vertical bay windows. Construction began in 1766 from designs made a year earlier by the engineer Francisco Llovet, as part of the plan to expand the port and the new town. This plan entailed reclaiming land from the sea, regularizing housing construction, and harmonising building facades⁸. The

new offices of Banco de Santander⁹ opened on 6 December 1898, and they remained there for 25 years until these facilities began to lack capacity. As a result, in April 1923 they decided on the move to what would be the eight, last, and current headquarters of the bank.

This emblematic building of the Cantabrian capital and Banco Santander itself, which presides over Paseo de Pereda, did not look then as we know it today. It has undergone a series of modifications and remodellings that form part of the building's history, a history that began on the night of the fire of 6 October 1880¹⁰, during which two buildings were razed along the Paseo del Muelle that housed the famous Café Suizo and the Recreation Club, at numbers 11 and 12.

A few months later, the representative of Claudio López y López, brother of the Marquis de Comillas¹¹, presented on 2 August 1881 to the Works Commission of Santander Town Hall¹², the order to rebuild on top of

6 AHBS. 'Report presented to the Board of Governors at the General Meeting held on 20 January 1881' ... for the second time this Credit establishment, has experienced the loss of seeing disappear into flames, the building in which it had established its offices, however on this occasion, as previously, they have suffered fewer losses of public interests, owing principally to the sound construction of the iron vault.

7 A.M.S. leg. G-82 n.83.

8 SAZATORNIL RUIZ, Luis. MANJÓN RODRÍGUEZ, Alodia Lorena. *Arquitectura y Urbanismo en la época de la Ilustración [Architecture and Urbanism in the Age of Enlightenment]*. Catalogue of the Cultural Heritage of Cantabria Volume III. pp. 183-218

9 MARTÍN-ACENA, Pablo. Op. Cit. p 84. The building at 2 Paseo del Muelle was sold for 700,000 pesetas to Francisco Pérez Venero. In 1924 Café Boulevard opened on the lower floors.

10 The fire of 6 October 1880 also affected the palatial home of the Marquis of Casa Pombo and the adjoining building, also owned by him, in which Banco de Santander was established.

11 RODRIGO Y ALHARILLA, Martín. *Los marqueses de Comillas 1817-1925*. Antonio y Claudio López [The Marquises of Comillas 1817-1925. Antonio y Claudio López. LID Editorial Empresarial, S.L. Madrid 2000. p. 66.

12 A.M.S. leg. G-83 n.13.



Eighth headquarters of Banco de Santander in 1923.
© CDIS Centro Documentación de la Imagen Santander.

the affected site a building designed by the architect José Oriol Mestre.

The Catalan architect employed an eclectic architectural language to accompany his ornamentation of: modillions, urns, pilasters, Corinthian columns, and cast-iron sculptures on the sides of the central balcony. The verticality of the building, standing taller than all the other buildings along the seafront, is even further distinguished by its facade, thanks to the three vertical wooden closed balconies; two on the sides of the building and the third above the entryway keystone canted arch.

With the intention once again of establishing a new headquarters to respond to the ever-growing needs of the bank, this building at 11 and 12 Paseo de Pereda was acquired by Eusebio López y Díaz de Quijano, nephew of Antonio López y López, Marquis of Comillas, for the sum of one million pesetas, agreed in writing on 1 September 1919, thanks in particular to the personal intervention of Emilio Botín y López, president of Banco de Santander.¹³

A few months later on 9 March 1920, the director of the bank requested authorisation from the Works Commission of Santander Town Hall to expand the offices.

In the report signed by architect Valentín Lavín del Noval, they propose to perform a radical transformation in the layout of the basement, ground floor and mezzanine. The plan was drawn up by architect Ricardo Bastida. According to this plan all the interior walls of the ground floor and mezzanine shall be demolished; the current staircase will be taken down; parapets and railings will be placed in the spaces of the ground floor where doors are not necessary; the horizontal lattices will be broken up, necessary for the passage of new stairs, and on the north facade the windows will be replaced by exterior closed balconies and the used area of the basement will be deepened and refurbished. On the basement floor deposit boxes shall be installed and that which the Bank determines for its own usage. On the ground floor there will be a wide central vestibule (hall) accessible from Paseo de Pereda; surrounding the vestibule (hall) and separated by wood and glass partitions shall be the offices that require greater contact with the public such as accounts, cash desks, etc, and on the mezzanine floor those of a more intimate nature, such as management, secretarial, etc, meeting rooms and advisors...¹⁴

With the works completed on 31 March 1923, the inauguration of the headquarters of Banco de Santander took place in the

presence of the appropriate local official and church authorities, as well as Emilio Botín y López, president of the Board.

The next refurbishment was approved on 13 March 1936 by the Town Hall Department of Works, to replace the balconies with newer wooden ones on the south or main facade, under the supervision of the architect Javier González de Riancho.¹⁵

The next year 10 dormer windows were built, and in January 1942 they presented to the same Works Commission a plan to remodel the main facade, designed by the architect Pedro Mugurza, in which he suggests to simply remove the closed balconies, both for aesthetic reasons as well as to avoid a fire hazard. This problem has been resolved in the simplest and most economical fashion, retaining the existing openings on the facade, which give way to the balconies and having parapets on both sides and in the centre an overlaid decoration that gives it the character of a public building, instead of the residential building it currently is.

Indeed, at that time the building was also occupied by residents, a hotel, and the headquarters of the Sailing Club, but owing to the absorption of Banco Mercantil, the opening of new branches and the increase in operations and the volume of business, they were forced to expand their facilities at Paseo de Pereda, beginning in 1945 to take the necessary steps to evict tenants.¹⁶

On 24 December 1951, bank president Emilio Botín Sanz de Sautuola López first presented to Santander Town Hall the plan to expand the bank building to that which we know it today. They sought to accommodate the present and future growth of the bank, develop a number of locations and above all... to beautify the city, giving it a monumental building that is equally worthy of presiding over all of the Bank's buildings spread throughout the main cities of Spain¹⁷, and so the current headquarters of Banco de Santander were conceived. The plan was overseen by the architect Javier González de Riancho¹⁸, intending to demolish numbers 9 and 10 on Paseo de Pereda, which had been

¹⁵ A.M.S.leg. G-304 n.25.

¹⁶ MARTÍN-ACEÑA, Pablo. Op. Cit. p.164.

¹⁷ A.M.S.leg.I - 17 n. 26.

¹⁸ MORALES SARO, María Cruz. Javier González de Riancho (1881-1953): arquitecto [Javier González de Riancho (1881-1953): architect. Cantabria Official School of Architects. Santander 1983.

¹³ AHBS, D4489-10 Record of the Governing Board 30-6-1919.
AHBS, D4489-178 Record of the Governing Board 14-8-1919.
AHBS, D4489-179 Record of the Governing Board 1-9-1919.

¹⁴ A.M.S.leg. F-330 n.21.



Computer generated image of the Banco Santander Financial City in Boadilla del Monte. Madrid. © Banco Santander.

acquired by the Bank in 1946 and bordered the west side of the bank's building, and to build a twin building on that site, with the same arrangement of floors and facades. The novelty lay in turning the two bodies of the building into one, linking them with a third structure, a grand arcade that does not detract from the street that separates them, giving the whole a monumental character comparable to the finest buildings in the greatest foreign cities, where these truly triumphal arches are admired for giving access to plazas, major roads through public buildings from other centuries.¹⁹

The arch spans the width of Calle Marcelino Sanz de Sautuola, also known as Calle del Martillo, which as described in the report is 11 metres and 30 centimetres wide, and its height up to the keystone at 14 metres. The architectural composition of the arch is of the classic style, an entablature separated by two pilasters with a central motif, which could be no other but the heraldic shield of Santander, and above this entablature a Greek upper floor crowned with four statues made of marble or stone, representing the Arts, Agriculture, Business and Sailing, by sculptor José Planes Peñalver.²⁰ And on the lower level a large frieze in high relief represents the Bank protecting the Industries, Blast Furnaces, mining,

sports and other elements of life, national and international interests.²¹

Since then Banco Santander has grown exceptionally, becoming a leading international bank, and in 1999 carrying out a project as pioneering as the Santander Financial City headquarters, integrated into the Mediterranean surroundings of Boadilla del Monte, a town to the northeast of Madrid.

This idea was conceived and developed to concentrate a series of new buildings in one autonomous space of 160 hectares, comprising: a corporate complex, two data processing centres, a training centre, a residence, a maintenance and logistics complex, a kindergarten, a sports complex, an exhibition hall and a communications tower, plus a golf course. The scope of the project was designed by Irish architect Kevin Roche, winner of the 1982 Pritzker Prize in architecture. He managed to capture the attention of Emilio Botín, then president of Banco Santander, to create a family work environment in which nine thousand people coexist. ●

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The Banco de España building. 1882-2006

Pedro Navascués Palacio

Background¹

Among the first resolutions passed by the *Banco de San Carlos* in the early months after its founding (1782) was the decision to lease a house belonging to the Count of Sástago in Calle de la Luna, Madrid. While the building was being refurbished, the general shareholders' meeting was held in the 'decency and comfort' of the palace of the Count of Altamira, in Calle Ancha de San Bernardo.

In 1823 the *Banco de San Carlos* bought a house on Calle de la Montera, also fronting onto Calle Angosta de San Bernardo, which is today Calle de la Aduana. The first meeting was held in the new building in 1825. Meanwhile, a Royal Warrant on 9 July 1829 created the *Banco Español de San Fernando* with part of the capital of the *Banco de San Carlos*, and it was installed in the premises on Calle Montera, which it occupied until merged with the *Banco de Isabel II* in 1847. Following the merger, the new *Banco de San Fernando* was relocated to the former offices of the *Banco de Isabel II* in the house of the *Cinco Gremios* (Five Guilds) on Calle de Atocha. When the Banco de España was founded in 1856 it occupied this same building until it was transferred to its new headquarters on the corner of Calle Alcalá and Paseo del Prado in 1891.

The Bank moved out of the old house of the *Cinco Gremios* as its increasingly complex needs made it difficult to adapt a conventional building. The idea of banking establishments as a particular building type or as a specific subject for architecture had not taken hold in Spain, or elsewhere in Europe for that matter, such that stylistic considerations took precedence over practical needs.

Thus, more than just a good and practical building, the Banco de España urgently needed a building specifically designed to



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house the Bank's departments, and which responded to its particular needs.

After a number of years of inconclusive efforts, the Board decided to buy a large plot suitable for a new building of its own. Talks were held with the Duke of Sexto to establish the terms on which he would sell the house, garden and orchard on the corner of Calle Alcalá and Paseo del Prado, better known as the Palace of the Marquis of Alcañices. A deal was reached in March 1882, setting the price at 3,187,500 pesetas. The Banco de España made a wise decision in choosing this plot, as it occupies an unrivalled strategic location in the city.

The works committee and the 1882 competition

Once the land had been bought in March 1882, a Works Committee was set up. This comprised the Bank's Governor, various board members, and the Bank's secretary, with a remit to study everything concerning the new building.

First of all, the new committee proposed the construction of two separate, independent buildings for the Bank. The first of these

was intended to be the main building, and would be an entirely stand-alone building housing the Bank's general services, including everything from the cash desks to meeting rooms (for the Governing Council, General Shareholders' Meetings, lotteries, etc.), along with the areas for serving the public. The secondary building would house the workshops and presses for banknote printing, along with activities relating to tax collection.

Having decided on this approach, the Works Committee's next important step was its decision to run a competition for the design of the new buildings. Only four designs were ultimately submitted, and these were examined in January 1883. All of them expressed the reservation that it would only be possible to construct one of the buildings on the site unless adjoining land was bought. In February 1883 the Governing Council declared the competition null and void, considering none of the designs to have sufficient merit to deserve the prize. Nevertheless, in recognition of their contributions, a runner-up prize of 30,000 pesetas was awarded to the 'Doblón' design by the prestigious architects Luis Aladrén and Adolfo Morales de los Ríos.

1 Summary of an article by Pedro Navascués Palacio, 'El Banco de España en Madrid. Génesis de un edificio', published in *El Banco de España. Dos siglos de historia. 1782-1982*, Madrid, 1982



© Banco de España.

A second runner-up prize was divided equally between the 'Mercurio' design by Enrique Repullés Segarra and José González-Carvajal, and the 'Comercio' design by Luis María Argenti y Herrera. The fourth design, 'Labor, Creditum et Arts', was disqualified on the grounds that it did not meet the conditions laid down in the competition.

The final building plans

Almost five years elapsed between the 1882 competition and the definition of the plans used to start the building work. A whole host of changes took place during this period, making today's Banco de España building very different from that originally planned. These changes affected the nature of the building, which would develop into landmark and one of the most emblematic examples of what was referred to as 'modern Madrid'.

After the competition had been adjudicated, the Bank had just three designs, none of which —despite the prizes awarded— met the needs of the establishment or the wishes of the Governing Council. Eduardo de Adaro was therefore commissioned to conduct a study of major European banking establishments 'in situ', so as to gather data, particularly on technical matters, security, and distribution, for use in preparation of a final design jointly with his colleague, Sáinz de la Lastra. However, there is no hiding the fact that many of the suggestions in the 'Doblón', 'Mercurio' and 'Comercio' designs —which were numerous and valid— must have also had an influence on the plans. In particular, the fact that the participants had all complained of the narrowness of the plot for the two buildings envisaged in

the competition led the Works Committee to consider combining them in a single building, which was what it eventually chose to do. Adaro and Sáinz de la Lastra prepared their final design, which was approved on 31 December 1883, taking this major change into account. However, although the design was awarded the gold medal when it was presented at the National Exhibition of Fine Arts in 1884, it was not how the building would ultimately look.

Sainz de la Lastra died at the end of 1884 and was briefly succeeded by Álvarez Capra, who was later replaced by José María Aguilar y Vela, who would play a decisive role in the stage that began in 1885. Aguilar's joining the project coincided with the Governor of the Bank's entering into negotiations with the *Congregación de Naturales Navarros de San Fermín* with a view to buying the plot they occupied adjacent to the Bank. This purchase was concluded in early 1886. In order to give the plot a more regular shape, some land behind the San Fermín plot was also bought from the school of road engineers. This purchase meant the plans had to be changed, although building work was already under way, representing a second shift away from the design in the 1882 competition. This may be considered a 'first expansion' and, more than just a scaling up of the plans it was a genuine extension of the building, as by 1885 construction work had already reached the main floor.

In March 1886 Aguilar presented a study of the façade of the Salón del Prado that could well include the idea of a central body in which the current grand staircase is located, shifting the focus from the entrance on the chamfered corner to that on Paseo del Prado. This obviously meant rethinking the interior distribution, leading to the emergence of a second building with its own characteristics, internally juxtaposed with the main nucleus, but not distinguishable from the outside, due to the uniformity of the façade. A comparison of the entrance on the chamfered corner, initially intended as the main entrance, with that on Paseo del Prado, which subsequently took on this role, is a good illustration of the two different approaches to the design of the Banco de España building taken in 1882 and 1886: the former exemplifies a relatively modest approach, whereas the latter aims at —and achieves— truly magnificent monumental scale, highlighting the two very different conceptions of the building.

Two more plots were purchased in early

1887 to enable the building to be completed and given a more regular shape. These were on the corner of Paseo del Prado and Calle de los Madrazo, and belonged to the Marquis of Larios and the Marquis of Retortillo. This meant preparing the final plans for the layout and elevation of the building, thus bringing to a conclusion the paradoxical history of a construction project for which the plans were subject to continual design revisions over a five-year period.

Description of the building

The façade on Paseo del Prado is undoubtedly one of the most powerful images of 19th century Spanish architecture, in which, within the overall monumental style, two intrinsic features of the establishment — industrial and representational— coexist. The first of these characteristics applies to the entire base of the building, constructed in high-quality granite ashlar. Slotted in between the extremely sober base and second floor is the main floor, with a façade in limestone from La Alconera (Badajoz). Special attention was paid to the bases of the arches, columns and balustrades, to distinguish this as the main floor, on which the offices and meeting rooms would be situated.

The two inscriptions commemorating the start (4 July 1884) and completion of building work (3 March 1891) flank the main entrance. These were drafted by the Royal Academy of History at the Bank's behest.

Over the main entrance there is a massive balcony structure, where Adaro and Aguilar closed the central cavity with an arch and two sides with lintels. The sculptural reliefs adorning the spandrels of the arches, the vertical bands, and the decorative tops of the composition as a whole, make it clear that this entrance has pride of place.

Along with this bulkier work, the façade abounds in fine work, thanks to the genuine sculptors who were responsible for the shafts, capitals, medallions, keys, spandrels, decorative pilasters, ornamental tops, and in particular, the series of caryatids arranged along the flanking wings. All together, this comprised a rich array that some directors even found distasteful. For instance, the Marquis of Aguilar de Campoo felt that the 'external architectural luxury of the new building was more suited to a palace than an industrial establishment.' To execute these delicate

works models were requested from a number of the most renowned sculptors of the time. However, these models were executed by other sculptors, although the most critical works were entrusted to the marble sculptor Carlo Nicoli in Carrara (Italy), who undertook to carve the main sculptures of the façade carefully and artistically in second class marble, following the plaster models provided.

An essential complement to the façades is the wrought- and cast-iron work by Bernardo Asins, responsible for the finest iron constructions in Madrid, including the Palacio de Cristal in the Retiro park and the Senate Library. He also undertook the construction in soft iron of the entrance doors to the building, which can be considered unique in their class for their time.

The well organised screen of the façade gives no hint that it conceals a complex distribution of spaces, resulting from the constant changes made to the plans while work was already under way. In fact, the building's floor plan includes two main juxtaposed axes, somewhat poorly integrated with one another, that create two radically different atmospheres in terms of space, light and handling. The first comprises a spatial sequence along the axis of the chamber, with the entrance, vestibule, staircase, and the magnificent courtyard that was the general cash operations area and is now the library of the Studies Department. This is all treated soberly, close to the spirit sought by the 1882 competition, where the building is considered more of an industrial establishment than a palace or monument. The latter are precisely the characteristics that define the main axis on Paseo del Prado side, where the entrance and grand staircase were conceived of along very different lines, incorporating the regal character of the staircase, which offers some interesting perspectives.

From the architectural viewpoint, the most interesting of all the interior spaces are the general cash-operations patio and the grand staircase. The former is a true gem in cast iron, the metal structure being handled with consummate skill to free it from the potential monotony and weight of this quintessentially industrial material. As with all the metal structures in the building, this was produced by the Mieres factory, which won the contract in 1884 against strong competition from some of the leading manufacturers in Europe as well as those of Spain.

The detailed design of the grand staircase was completed by Adaro and Aguilar in 1888, who stipulated in the terms of the contract for its construction that the marble used was to be from Carrara. It follows the pattern of an imperial staircase, with a single flight at the bottom that divides into two flights leading in opposite directions, with the variant of including an exit on both sides of the first flight, leading off to the mezzanine. It is richly decorated with lion heads, palms, crowns, caducei, and medallions with the head of Mercury, as well as the medallions with the busts of Charles III, Charles IV, Ferdinand VII, Isabella II, Alfonso XII, and Alfonso XIII.

The set of stained glass windows, made by the Munich-based company Mayer, form an important complement to the stairs, illuminated on all levels by windows on the main and rear façades and the twin lateral courtyards, and the light from the large opening of the skylight above. Particularly beautiful is the composition illuminating the stairwell from above, designed to look like a balustrade in perspective, with the goddess Fortuna in the skylight at the back, holding the cornucopia and with the wheel guiding the course of human life at her feet. The Old World and the mythical rape of Europa are also shown at her feet, with allegories of Asia, Africa, America and Oceania in the four corners.

The 1927 expansion and other changes As a result of the Bank's constantly growing needs, in 1923 the neighbouring Santamarca buildings were bought from the Dowager Duchess of Nájera. The Bank's architect, José Yáñez, submitted his draft plans for the new building in 1927, and demolition of the houses began in 1929. The architect clearly saw the problem that the juxtaposition of a different architectural style to that of the old building would suppose, particularly as the new building was meant to be an extension of the old one. He therefore opted to relegate all the new 1920s architecture to the interior, and in a show of respect for the city and for the building, repeated Adaro's model with scrupulous precision. Not only did Yáñez repeat the design of the elevation but he sought out the same materials from the same quarries, and required that the ironwork of the façades, etc. have the same dimensions as the original work. He even included contractual clauses to ensure that all subcontractors adhered to the models on

display in the old building. Nevertheless, Yáñez did introduce some changes, particularly in the central block on Calle Alcalá.

The interior architecture of the grand hall or operations patio is of a very different style. This hall is to the extension what the iron courtyard was to the main building or the grand staircase to the true 'first' expansion of the Bank building. It comprises an immense courtyard, covering nine hundred square metres, rising to a height of twenty-seven metres. Its internal elevations interpret various classical themes, but all in an anti-classical context that is reminiscent of the architecture of 1920s New York. This immense courtyard is lit from a huge suspended stained-glass window overhead, which is an exceptional example of the as-yet unstudied Art Deco in Spain. The work was carried out by the firm Maumejean, which interpreted various allegories in a linear, zigzagging and highly geometrical style. The common underlying theme was the idea of progress and prosperity, with commerce, industry, agriculture, and fishing, etc. appearing again.

As an epilogue, between 1969 and 1975 the Banco de España again expanded its premises on Calle de Los Madrazo and Calle Marqués de Cubas, following Javier Yáñez Orcóyen's plans, which had nothing to do with the character of the old building, but did not make a contribution of any interest. With this new expansion the Bank came to fill the whole block it had timidly begun to occupy in 1882. To complete the building, only the Calamarte Bank on the corner of Calle Alcalá and Calle Marqués de Cubas, already owned by the Banco de España, remained to be redeveloped. A limited competition was run to solicit ideas in 1978, in which the architects Orio Bohigas, Luis Cubillo, Moreno Barberá, Rafael Moneo and Javier Yáñez Orcóyen were invited to take part. The selected proposal (1979) was that of Moneo, who offered a chamfered solution for this corner, repeating all the elements Adaro had devised almost a century earlier for the building at the other end. The new building was opened in 2006. ●

The Riksbank Building

The Bank

The Riksbank was established in 1668 and is the world's oldest central bank. All the Riksbank buildings have always been located in the heart of Stockholm. After a number of years at Storkyrkobrinken, where it was located in a palace built by Axel Oxenstierna, the Riksbank moved to Järntorget in 1680 where for the first time it was given its own building, designed by Tessin the Elder.

In 1907, the Riksbank moved next door to the Riksdag building in a newly constructed area on Helgeandsholmen. Following the reform to a unicameral system of parliament, the Riksdag required more space and this resulted in the Riksbank moving to Brunkebergstorg in 1976.

Brunkeberg Ridge on Norrmalm long played a part in the defence of Stockholm. From the top of the steep, wooded ridge the military were able to control the roads leading into the city from the north. So it was entirely in keeping with tradition to keep the Riksbank's vault in the interior of Brunkeberg Ridge.

Presumably, Brunkeberg was named after the 14th century Lord Chief Justice, Johan Brunkow. Brunkow held office at the court of King Birger Magnusson, and his life came to a dramatic end in 1391 when he was hanged on the gallows of Brunkeberg.

In the Battle of Brunkeberg on 10 October 1471, one of the most famous events in the history of Stockholm, the Swedes, led by Sten Sture the Elder, defeated the Danes under Kristian I. The victory paved the way for Gustav Vasa's unification of Sweden as a free and independent kingdom.

The building

The new Riksbank building at Brunkebergstorg was completed in 1976 and took six years to build. The black granite that covers the facades of the building was quarried in Göinge in north Skåne. Stonemasons in Bohuslän worked the large stone blocks, producing their rough surface.

On entering the building, visitors are met by walls, ceilings and furniture of light,



both pictures © Sveriges Riksbank.

thinly cut birch from Norrland and Finland. The rooms and corridors are adorned with sculptures, tapestries and oil paintings. Peter Celsing was not content with the customary architect role. He also designed the interior and engaged the services of artists Sivert Lindblom and Ulrik Samuelson at an early stage of his work.

Celsing chose the colours for the interior together with the artist Olle Nyman. Here,

we encounter once again the black granite of the building's facades in the panelling and floors. The walls are white, while the ceilings, pillars and carpets are yellow.

Celsing used the geometric shapes of the circle and square as a basis for his designs. The main structure of the house creates the impression of a huge cube; the main entrance hall includes cylinder-shaped doors, the inner court forms a square and the top floor is



all pictures © Sveriges Riksbank.

shaped like a dome. The circular and square shapes are also recurrent features of the furniture and other decorative details.

As a contrast to the heavy structure and black granite, Celsing chose to decorate the interior with textiles. Several of the textiles were woven by Handarbetets Vänner (the Friends of Textile Art).

The architect

During the post-war era, the Klara district of Stockholm was demolished. The most prestigious assignments in the rebuilding of this district were given to Peter

Celsing. Born in 1920, Celsing was an architect and professor at the Royal Institute of Technology, having trained at the Royal University College of Fine Arts. Following graduation, he began his architectural career in Beirut.

On his return to Sweden, Celsing was appointed chief architect at Stockholms Spårvägar (now Stockholm Transport) where he became involved in the planning of underground metro stations for Stockholm's suburbs. In the 1950s, Celsing designed the churches in Härlanda in Gothenburg, Almtuna in Uppsala and Vällingby

in Stockholm. He restored the university library Carolina Rediviva in Uppsala as well as the Royal Opera House and the Operakällaren restaurant in Kungsträdgården in Stockholm. In the 1960s, he also won two Nordic competitions which resulted in the Filmhuset building in Gärdet and Sergels Torg including Kulturhuset. The new Riksbank building on Brunkebergstorg proved to be his last project. Peter Celsing died on 16 March 1974. His final days as an architect were spent working on the top floor where he recreated the 'old attics of his childhood'. ●

SEB's building at Kungsträdgårdsgatan celebrates 100 Years

Niklas Munter

On 23 September 1915 the doors opened to what was then one of Stockholm's most modern banking palaces. The historic house has since been the scene of a large part of Swedish banking and corporate history, but also a modern workplace, an environmentally certified building and an increasingly important customer meeting place.

It was in 1907 that the Board of Stockholm's Enskilda Bank decided to leave its headquarters at Lilla Nygatan in Stockholm's Old Town and instead build a new modern building. The following year, the bank bought the current plot at Kungsträdgården, where two older buildings stood at the time, the Hotel du Nord and the Royal Dramatic Theatre.

After demolishing the old building, in September 1911 the bank announced an architectural competition for the design of the new house. The race was won by the young architect Ivar Tengbom, who, inspired by the medieval banking family di Medici in Florence, designed a building that would express stability, strength and security.

Tengbom later became one of the most significant architects in Sweden. Among the other buildings he designed are the Stockholm Concert Hall and Stockholm School of Economics.

Inauguration.

On Thursday, September 23, 1915 the new offices of Stockholm's Enskilda Bank were ready to be inaugurated. Banknotes and documents were transported in the morning from Lilla Nygatan and at 10:00 am the doors opened to the public. The inauguration took place in the presence of KA Wallenberg, who at that time had left the operational management of the bank and was now the country's foreign minister.

Both Aftonbladet and Svenska Dagbladet, two important newspapers, were present at the opening ceremony and posted impressive reviews about the new bank



Restaurant Du Nord was a popular destination for locals in Stockholm around 1900. © SEB.



The old Royal Dramatic Theatre was built in 1842 and torn down in 1910. The last performance was in June 1907. © SEB.



1945: View of the bank hall before remodelling in 1946-1949. © SEB.



Ivar Tengbom. © SEB.

palace.

'The first thing you will definitely notice when entering this superior banking hall are artistically sculpted, richly ornamented oak gates that constitute the entrance to the hall,' wrote Aftonbladet.

'When the first client on Thursday morning entered inside the massive bronze doors, the whole machinery was paired and ready to work. And soon, the sound of talking rose and fell in Stockholm's most modern banking hall, as if it had risen and fallen there for years,' wrote Svenska Dagbladet.

One of the novelties in the new office was that officials received free lunches, but in return they could not leave the bank's premises, unless they received special authorisation.

Tradition and looking towards the future

One, who has spent many years in the bank's corridors, is SEB's Chairman Marcus Wallenberg.

'I started spending time here when I was ten years old. I was here often and the bank's kind janitor took care of me and my siblings when we sat and waited. Eight years old, I started a newspaper, which I printed down in the bank's print shop.'

What does the continuity, represented by the building, mean? 'This building is

associated with a lot of tradition, but also with looking towards the future. I definitely believe that this building has a place in the bank's future and a place in the future of business in general. Our business will of course be much more digital in the future, but you must have a place to meet, and this is very practical,' he says.

A building for client meetings

Also Annika Falkengren, CEO and president of SEB, has a long relationship to the building at Kungsträdgårdsgatan.

'The first time I came here was before Christmas in 1987, when I was here on a job interview. I rarely had any reason to come here, to the so-called executive floor where I work now. But, I remember it was very quiet and closed here. Hopefully it is more open and lively today.' What is your vision for Kungsträdgårdsgatan going forward?

'Many customers like to come to our flagship building and take part in our history and our fine art... It is amazing that all of us who work in the bank can feel that we have 160 years of business culture and business continuity behind us. But, at the same time we work in the present and look ahead because customers today have other needs. We must find a balance where we take advantage of our proud heritage, while we look to bring the bank forward.' ●

Bank Lombard Odier & Co Ltd at Rue De La Corraterie

Hugo Bänziger and Céline Piguet Grand

The Bank Lombard Odier & Co Ltd (the 'Bank'), whose offices are located at 11 rue de la Corraterie, was founded in 1796 by Henri Hentsch. Two years later, Jean-Gédéon Lombard joined as a Partner and the Bank was renamed Henri Hentsch & Lombard. The partners split in 1800 to each continue their own business. However, in 2002, the two banks Lombard Odier & Cie and Darier Hentsch & Cie merged. The history of the Bank is closely linked to that of its founding families, to Geneva and to rue de la Corraterie.

Throughout its seven century existence, rue de la Corraterie has always played an essential role in the life of Geneva. In the Middle Ages, during the market fairs, there was a horse market in the street named 'Carrerria corrateriae equorum' (horse market). In the seventeenth century, the first Geneva horse racing came to this place and the first riding masters, along with their jockeys, were called 'corratiers'. It is still considered today to be one of the aristocratic streets of Geneva, formal, elegant and without embellishment.

The current premises of the Bank in rue de la Corraterie comprises several buildings that were constructed independently of each other, but whose stories are often interwoven. Two of the buildings have a particularly rich history.

The town house located at 15 rue de la Corraterie was built in 1708 by Abraham Gallatin. The Gallatins were bankers to Louis XIV but their wealth suffered considerably from the French Revolution. Albert Gallatin left Geneva for the United States where he went into politics to support Thomas Jefferson and eventually became Secretary to the US Treasury. The legacy of Albert Gallatin was essentially of debt and the family was forced to sell their home. The bank Hentsch rented the property from 1858. It was subsequently bought by Mrs Trembley, wife of Henri-Charles Lombard, who was a Doctor.



After the merger with Bonna & Cie in 1920, a two-storey building that partly masks the townhouse was built for Hentsch & Cie in order to install bank counters. Around this time, as the forge was removed, the last medieval physical link between Corraterie and the equine world disappeared.

Since 1858 Lombard Odier & Cie has had its base at the townhouse at 11 rue de la Corraterie. In 1921, Lombard Odier & Cie proceeded with the demolition of the cramped old house, and replaced it with the current building designed by the Genevan architect Frantz Fulpius. It was opened in 1923.

One of the most distinctive 'motifs' of the building at 11 rue de la Corraterie is located on the door at the main entrance. The decorative ornament on the door is composed of four ears of wheat, separated by four 'fleurons'. These elements are linked by a flower in the center of each golden symbol. Historically, farmers stored their savings in a safe place: the bank. The ears of wheat, symbolising the fruits of labour in the fields, are still used by some banks to represent industry and savings. ●



The Bank for International Settlements in Basel and its landmark buildings¹

Piet Clement

The BIS and Basel

The Bank for International Settlements (BIS), an international organisation owned by and working exclusively for central banks from across the world, was created in 1930 by international treaty (The Hague Agreement, 20 January 1930). The initial mandate of the BIS was double: to administer the reparation payments imposed on Germany after the First World War, and to foster closer cooperation between its member central banks. The reparation payments issue quickly receded into the background, turning central bank cooperation into the BIS's main objective – which remains to this day. In the 1930s, this cooperation involved most European central banks, plus those from the United States and Japan. Today, 60 central banks from across the five continents, together representing some 95% of global GDP, are shareholding members of the BIS.

Choosing a permanent home for the BIS proved to be something of a challenge. The UK government had hoped to lure the BIS to London, the world's main financial centre at the time, but the French objected and instead proposed Brussels (realising that, for political and emotional reasons, Paris would be unacceptable to the Germans). In the end, Brussels too was rejected – much to the ire of the Belgian delegation participating in the negotiations – and the final choice fell on a location in neutral Switzerland. The ultimate choice for Basel was arrived at by elimination: Geneva was felt to be 'too political' (the League of Nations had its seat there), Lausanne to be too small, and Zurich – Switzerland's main financial centre – to be 'too German' (sic...). Basel offered the advantage of being on the border with both France and Germany, and of being a railway hub in Europe with easy connections to most European capitals – important at a time when most business travel happened by train and not by plane.



The BIS building (former Grand Hôtel Savoy Univers) in the 1950s (centre). © BIS Archive.

The temporary becomes (almost) permanent

There was a pressing urgency in finding suitable accommodation in Basel. The BIS was scheduled to take over the tasks previously executed by the Office of the Agent General for Reparations in Berlin as quickly as possible, and to act as the trustee for a new international loan issued on behalf of Germany (the 1930 Young Loan). The BIS's first Board meeting took place on 26-27 February 1930, at the premises of the Bank of Italy in Rome. Scarcely two and a half months later, on 17 May 1930, the new organisation opened its doors for business in a building on Centralbahnstrasse 7 in Basel, just across from the west-wing of the Basel main railway station. That building was the former Grand Hôtel Savoy Univers, built in 1902-1905 in neo-classical style by the Swiss architects Emanuel La Roche and Fritz Staehelin (La Roche also had a hand in the neo-baroque railway station facing the hotel, completed in 1907). The hotel was adapted to its new functions in record time: guest rooms were converted into offices and the elegant dining room became the Board meeting room annex library. The BIS at first rented the building, as this was thought to be only a temporary solution. However, in the end the BIS would remain at the Centralbahnstrasse 7 until 1977. In 1954, the Bank bought the building outright, but by then it was already too small.



BIS construction site, 1973-74. © BIS Archive.

The gradual expansion of the Bank after the Second World War – staff numbers crept up from about 150 in the mid-1950s to 250 in the mid-1970s – meant that additional office space had to be rented or purchased in some of the adjacent buildings. This prompted the Bank in 1956 to commission from the Basel architect Martin Burckhardt plans for a new high-rise building at the Grand Hôtel Savoy Univers location. These plans – initially for a twelve but soon for an eighteen-storey building – were not particularly welcomed by the BIS's neighbours, nor by the Basel authorities. The matter was left to rest until 1965, when Martin Burckhardt was again asked to prepare a study for a new BIS building at the Centralbahnstrasse or at a suitable, neighbouring location. Different possibilities were considered, until the final choice fell on a large piece of land opposite the east-wing of the main railway station and only a few hundred meters from the original location. The BIS was able to acquire the land in 1968. From the outset, the Basel municipal government welcomed any BIS plans in this area, as it was in dire need of renovation.

¹ This article is based on BIS Archives and on papers kindly provided by Mr J-M Andreoli, who was directly involved in the Tower building project.

Up, up, up and... down

In December 1969, architect Burckhardt presented three different designs to the BIS Board of Directors: a round, high tower of 24-floors (82 metres tall); a horizontal block of 11 floors with rounded angles; or a rectangular complex with different building units of different heights. The Board quickly settled for the tower concept. In February 1970, the Bank applied for a building licence, but immediately met with opposition from the Heimatschutz, a local heritage organisation that argued that a 82-metres high tower would spoil Basel's historic skyline as it would be visible from the right Rhine-bank, rising above Basel's Münster cathedral spire. A revised project for a tower comprising 18-floors and 69 metres high was approved by the Basel Grossrat (Parliament) in May 1971. To make up for the loss in height, the surface of the lower floors was considerably enlarged.

There were further delays. The ink on the Grossrat-Beschluss (authorization) was hardly dry before the Swiss federal government decreed a general, temporary building stop to break the inflationary pressure on the Swiss economy of an already over-charged building sector. Almost simultaneously, the Basel National Action committee started to collect the necessary signatures for a referendum against the BIS project. One of the arguments used by the committee was that the planned tower '... would constitute a disturbing feature (...) spoiling the agreeable placid appearance of Basel'. The referendum was duly held on 24-26 September 1971 and rejected with a resounding 32,371 against 14,210 votes (or 69% in favour of the BIS project).

The excavation of the land on which the tower was to be built started in July 1972. From December of that year the concrete foundations were laid. The first stone was laid on 14 May 1973. The structure of the building was finished by April 1975, when the traditional fir tree was raised on the top. From then it took another two years before everything was ready to receive staff and the Bank's visitors in their brand-new, ultra-modern offices. The building activity was the most intense towards the end of 1976, when occasionally more than 350 construction workers worked simultaneously on the building site. On the day the outer façade on the top floor was mounted it was bitterly cold and snow fell heavily. In spite of the enormity and

complexity of the construction work, not a single serious accident occurred in the four and a half years it took to build the Tower.

The Bank's staff moved into their new premises on Monday, 21 March 1977, and seven weeks later, on 9 May 1977, the official inauguration took place. The old building, the former Grand Hôtel Savoy Univers, was sold in 1979 to a local insurance company.

Opinions on the aesthetic value of the Tower may differ (it has a distinct 1970s feel to it). Undeniably, though, the building has established itself as a well-known landmark in the Basel townscape. In many respects, the Tower has withstood the test of time remarkably well. The round shape of the building allows for an abundant flow of natural light. On a very practical level it also means you can never get lost in the building, as eventually you will always come back to your starting point.

A second landmark in Basel

During the 1990s, as the BIS was globalising far beyond the initial European sphere, staff numbers rose gradually from some 350 to over 500. The Bank had outgrown the Tower and an architectural competition was organised for the extension of the building at its existing location. The jury chose the design by the renowned Japanese architect Toyo Ito – a rectangular glass extension protruding from the base of the Tower building with a roof terrace and inner courtyard. However, adding an entirely new wing to the building would have taken a number of years. Unexpectedly, at about the same time an alternative solution presented itself. In December 1997, the Union Bank of Switzerland and the Swiss Bank Corporation announced their merger to form UBS. As a result, the Swiss Bank Corporation no longer needed the head office at the Aeschenplatz in Basel it had constructed in 1993-94 according to a design by the Swiss architect Mario Botta. This building, located at less than a kilometre from the BIS Tower, could be made available almost immediately, solving in one stroke the BIS's space problem. The BIS acquired the Botta building in 1998, and occupied it the same year after some internal adjustments. The building's design and use of materials is very typical of Mario Botta's style. Its half-round shape and the alternation of light and dark grey natural stone walls make it an eye-catching presence that nevertheless fits in well with the surrounding space.



The BIS Tower, Basel, Martin Burckhardt architect 1972-77. © BIS Archive.



The BIS Botta building, Basel, Mario Botta architect, 1993-94. © BIS Archive.

Outside Basel

Since the late 1990s, the BIS has also expanded outside Basel, albeit on a more modest scale. First, in 1998, a representative office for the Asia-Pacific region was set up in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China. The BIS Asian Office currently occupies a floor of the spectacular, 415-metres tall 2 International Finance Centre in Hong Kong's Central District, which was completed in 2003 and is also home to the Hong Kong Monetary Authority (Hong Kong's central bank). In 2002, a second representative office was opened in Mexico City to better serve the central bank community in the Americas. It is housed in the Torre Chapultepec, a 109-metres high construction completed in 1993. ●

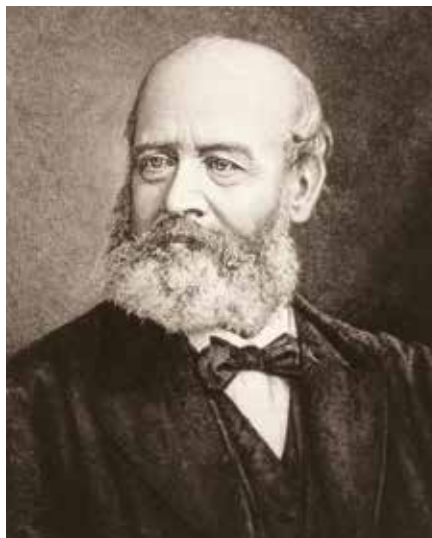
To beautify and ornament Zurich. Credit Suisse's head office on Paradeplatz

Joseph Jung

Before the middle of the 19th century nobody could have known that Zurich would one day develop into a major transport hub, a hotbed of academic and scientific research and one of the world's great banking centers, in the process becoming the focal point of Switzerland's economy and society. When the new Swiss state was created in 1848, the Confederation's political, economic and social structures changed too, and it was in this context that the Zurich business and political leader Alfred Escher (1819-1882) emerged as a transformational figure. He, more than anyone else, kick-started the development of modern Switzerland. He was also the founding father of Credit Suisse (originally known as Schweizerische Kreditanstalt), which since the final quarter of the 19th century has dominated Zurich's Paradeplatz with its grand head office building.

Three palaces for Zurich

Escher's central concern was the development of Switzerland's railways. He recognized that railways were crucial to a country's economic and social development and that railway infrastructure would decide the question of whether and when a state joined the modern world. Escher set the pace for railway construction in Switzerland, which in the crucial early years was entirely a private-sector matter. State-run Swiss Federal Railways (SBB) was only founded in 1902. The advance of the steam locomotive in Switzerland was predicated on a whole series of other developments, all of which were connected to Escher in some way. He oversaw what has come to be recognized as the greatest period of building construction in Zurich's history. Even today, no other politician or business leader is quite as present in the city as Escher. The three 'palaces' he had built in Zurich symbolize the importance of education, banking and transportation.



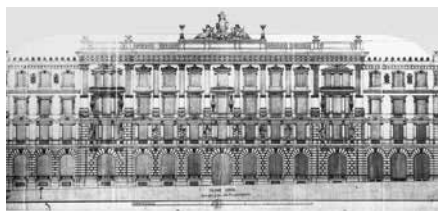
Alfred Escher (1819-1882), the man who commissioned Credit Suisse's head office building on Paradeplatz in Zurich. Etching by Edouard Jeanmaire (1847-1916).

These are the Polytechnic (1861-1864), the home of academic enquiry perched above the old city; the main train station (1865-1871), guarded since 1889 by the huge statue of Escher; and finally the Credit Suisse building (1873-1876), which turned Paradeplatz into the center of the financial industry and the main focal point for Bahnhofstrasse. It is interesting that Escher didn't push through plans for the fourth palace, a temple for music and theatre. It would have been the natural thing for him to build this, partly in honor of Richard Wagner, who lived in Zurich from 1849 until 1858. After building the Polytechnic, Gottfried Semper got as far as designing and planning the concert hall for Wagner, his friend from revolutionary days in Dresden. But the plans never came to fruition. The unrelentingly busy Escher did not have a really deep attachment to music and he was preoccupied by countless other commercial and political projects.

The founding of Credit Suisse: a sensational share issue and leased premises

About two decades elapsed between the founding of Credit Suisse (or Schweizerische Kreditanstalt as it was known then) on July 5, 1856, and the date it moved into the prestigious building that still serves as the bank's headquarters to this day. The new bank and its half dozen employees first based themselves in 'Kleiner Tiefenhof', a long, two-story building right next to the Confiserie Sprüngli confectionery shop.

Before the bank launched its public offering, there were mixed opinions about whether it would succeed or not. The popular view seemed to be that poor demand would force the founding committee led by Escher to take on a large proportion of the available shares themselves. The subscription was indeed fraught with considerable risk. Nobody could know how the Zurich public would respond to the foundation of a new bank in the mold of France's *Crédit Mobilier*. What is more, founding a company in the form of a publicly listed company was by no means an ordinary event in mid-19th century Switzerland. Ranged against the cautious and critical were those of a more optimistic bent, who believed in the birth of a new and modern Switzerland with infrastructure fit for the future. But what actually happened exceeded the imaginings of even the greatest optimist. On the very first day of subscription, tumultuous scenes were witnessed in front of the bank's premises as crowds of people tried to cram into the small offices. The Credit Suisse issue dominated conversation on the street and was taken up by the media. Arguments for or against an investment in the new bank were soon forgotten. Subscribing to Credit Suisse shares had become a social event, a mark of good taste. The share issue became a phenomenon without parallel in the economic history of 19th century Switzerland. The issue was sensationally successful and the shares were approximately seventy times oversubscribed.



The main facade of the new Credit Suisse building on Paradeplatz. Architectural drawing from 1872 by Jakob Friedrich Wanner (1830-1903), based on the drawing by Johann Kaspar Wolff (1818-1891). The bank moved into its new building on September 25, 1876.



Jakob Friedrich Wanner (1830-1903), architect of Credit Suisse's head office building, with his wife. Photograph from 1896 by J. Meiner.



The banking hall at Credit Suisse's head office in Zurich. Photograph from around 1900.

The bank's staff grew continually in the first year of business, and a move to larger premises was soon unavoidable. But it was decided that the time was not yet ripe to buy or build its very own premises, so in April 1858 the head office was moved out of 'Kleiner Tiefenhof' and into the east wing of the post office building, which was later to become 'Zentralhof', just by the Fraumünster church. Soon, though, the bank outgrew these offices too and it jumped at the chance to rent the post office manager's rooms in the other wing of the building. Although the number of employees continued to increase over the following years, a lack of alternatives meant that the bank remained at this address for about a decade.

It became increasingly clear to Credit Suisse's Board of Directors that the search for a new base would have to be intensified. In December 1864 the decision was made to build the bank's own premises. At the end of 1871 the section of the 'Feldhof' site bordering Paradeplatz and Talacker – where the old cemetery and the cantonal arsenal had been located – came up for sale. The bank and other investors bought the whole site for around 700,000 francs. The bank took over the part it needed and the other plots went to the other investors. At the time it was a relatively high price to pay for land, but the ambitious bank seized the opportunity and bought a plot at the edge of town that would eventually become the heart of Zurich in terms of both geography and importance, and that evolved into a national and international financial center.

Building the head office

As soon as the land purchase was completed in 1872 the Board of Directors acted quickly to get construction underway. It decided to hold a competition and invited ten architects to submit plans. From the very start, however, the other contestants must have realized that it would be difficult to beat Jacob Friedrich Wanner (1830-1903). He was chief architect at Escher's Nordostbahn railway company and had just delivered a fantastic piece of work in the shape of Zurich's new main train station (built between 1865 and 1871).

The planning committee chaired by Escher awarded first prize to Wanner's concept, though in equal place with the one submitted by Johann Kaspar Wolff (1818-1891). The big attraction of Wolff's plans was his design for the facade, while the interior layout of the building proposed by Wanner was particularly impressive. In the end, Wanner was chosen for the job, though with the proviso that he include a Wolff-style facade in his definitive plans. Once Zurich city council had issued the building permit, the construction company Locher & Cie. started on excavation work in spring 1873. The basic build was completed on schedule by the end of 1874. After that, however, there were massive delays in the remaining work. The project was hit by schedule and cost overruns, mainly as a result of ongoing changes and additions to the plans, new planning regulations and Wanner's ailing health. Consequently, Credit Suisse's employees, now numbering more than fifty, were only able to

move into the building at the end of September 1876, around two and a half years late.

At that time the bank only occupied the part of the building on the corner of Paradeplatz/Talacker. The rest of the property was rented out at first to companies, doctors and private individuals. There was great demand for space at this increasingly prestigious address, and by 1877 the bank was already taking in 72,000 francs in rent. Business volume and employee numbers continued to increase as the years went by and the bank once again had to expand physically. Gradually, Credit Suisse spread out into the two neighboring parts of the building. By 1901, none of the head office building, apart from the seven-room director's apartment, was being used for residential purposes any more.

Architecture of the head office building

Escher had said that the appearance of the new bank building should beautify and ornament the city of Zurich as much as the unique railway station building had done. Wanner responded with a design for a complex made up of distinct parts, some inspired by the Renaissance and some by Baroque style. The specifications also called for a monumental appearance, which the building fulfilled by its sheer scale and size, but also by the taut formality of the main facade onto Paradeplatz. The whole complex consists of three distinct buildings, designed to give the sense of one single extended structure. The large central building, which has nine axes and accounts for more than half the frontage, features a broad cornice, a weighty frieze



Credit Suisse's head office on Paradeplatz in Zurich with five horse-drawn taxis waiting in front of the main entrance. The legendary 'Rössliträm' ('Pony Tram') can also be seen in the foreground of this picture, taken around 1890.

and a row of colossal columns. The exterior of the building is broken up by the use of slightly protruding or recessed sections and a very regular pattern of windows. The material used is sandstone.

Escher also stipulated that the architecture of Credit Suisse's showpiece building should give an impression of grandeur and solidity. This is why today we see a main facade towering over Paradeplatz with colossal pillars and pilasters extending upwards in front of the two upper floors of the central building, as well as a highly structured cornice fused to the frieze, which ties the top floor smoothly into the overall facade – truly a crowning finish to a building of imperial stature. It is certainly no criticism to note that Wanner took various elements from other architects and existing buildings and wove these into the Credit Suisse building. Quite the contrary. The subtle handling of the influence of facade designs used on the Bank in Zurich (architect Georg Lásius, built in 1872/73) and on the Polytechnic (Gottfried Semper's design with its highlighted bossage on the central section) was very much to his credit.

The entrance to the Credit Suisse building was initially in the courtyard and in no way reflected the ornate facade presented to Paradeplatz. Probably for this reason, the board decided in 1881 to complete the 38 meter wide central section of the frontage facing Bahnhofstrasse with decorative figures. Wanner refused the job of producing a concept, so architect Adolf Brunner was given the job instead. A design competition was launched, which was ultimately won by the Geneva-based sculptor Charles François Marie Iguel (1827-1897), who was

also asked to make the pieces. By 1882 three seated female figures (allegories for industry, commerce and farming) were ready to be installed, flanked on each side by groups of children (representing study and vigilance); these were followed a year later by a female figure with two floating spirits (representing the arts and crafts) looking out over Bahnhofstrasse. It turned out that the Schleithheimer sandstone expressly requested by the artist was not resistant to frost, and in 1894 the left leg of the left spirit fell into Bahnhofstrasse. A net was put up to catch falling pieces of sculpture, but it proved ineffective, so to avoid further damage to pedestrians and to the sculptures themselves, the groups of figures were gradually removed. The current groups, facing both Bahnhofstrasse and Paradeplatz, were inspired by Iguel and installed as part of the comprehensive facade refurbishment carried out in 1996/97 by a consortium led by Josef Ineichen.

Conversions and renovations

Credit Suisse's head office building has now dominated Paradeplatz for 140 years. During this time, the whole complex, inside and out, including facades, has had to be refurbished several times. The work done in the early 1930s was entrusted to the two star Swiss architects of their day Otto Pfister (1880-1959) and Werner Pfister (1884-1950). They created new internal spaces for the securities desks and a lobby. They also extended the small board room. Twenty years later the Pfister brothers renovated the entire exterior of the complex. Credit Suisse's decision in the 1950/60s not to jump on the bandwagon and to replace its headquarters with a brand new building, which is what the Bankverein (now UBS) did with the neighboring building on Paradeplatz, now appears courageous. We must be grateful today that those decision-makers continued to value Escher's imposing palace of banking, electing to keep it rather than knock it down to make way for a new structure that would almost certainly have failed to meet the architectural and functional requirements of the present day.

From 1965 to 1970 the architect Werner Stücheli (1916-1983) reconfigured the ground floor facing Bahnhofstrasse and Paradeplatz with an enlarged lobby and a new banking hall. Major renovation works had to be carried out on the facades

between 1993 and 1997 owing to serious deterioration. Pollution-laden rain had eaten into the sandstone, which was beginning to fall off in slivers or turn to powder. Artificial stone parts used in previous renovations had blackened, so these were replaced by sandstone. The huge sandstone balcony slabs were remounted, and new wrought-iron roof and balcony railings were installed. The most recent modifications took place between 1999 and 2002 when the entire ground floor area was redesigned. The bank now only occupies around 1450 m² of the ground floor. Most of the rest is rented out to shops (1650 m²) or is given over to public usage (1200 m²). ●

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Architecture for Raiffeisen. Every bank building is unique

Andreas Hüttenmoser

The Raiffeisen Group, which is organised as a cooperative, is the third largest Swiss bank, with 1000 locations and some 300 organisationally- and legally-independent Raiffeisen banks. A significant characteristic of the individual banks is their local integration into the communities and cities. The Raiffeisen banks invest around CHF 150 – 170 million in their infrastructure each year.

As a service centre for the cooperatives (IT, Central Bank, Legal Service, Specialist Consulting, etc.) Raiffeisen Switzerland covers the core activities that are available to all of the banks. Within Raiffeisen Switzerland, Construction Consulting fulfils an advisory role for all of the Raiffeisen banks. As the name implies, Construction Consulting merely provides advice; decisions are made locally by the individual banks.

Raiffeisen is a heterogeneous group with very strong regional and local integration, giving each individual Raiffeisen bank its own individual identity. This significant characteristic can also be noticed with regard to the architecture. In contrast to its competitors, Raiffeisen does not want a consistent, repetitive corporate design for its bank branches. From a purely visual and superficial perspective, the red Raiffeisen lettering is the only feature that links the banks.

Raiffeisen is moving forward with the 'Archability' strategy

Under the title 'Archability', Raiffeisen has developed a strategy based on the guiding principles of sustainability, architecture + design and processes, which has created a new definition of corporate design that is geared precisely towards the needs of a cooperative. But how is it possible to define a corporate design which has no specific design? Our understanding of CD is virtually the antithesis to the traditional term,



Raiffeisenbank Zurich at the Kreuzplatz. Pictures of historical personalities who lived in the Hottingen area have been appliquéd on the walls. Foto: Jan Bitter, Berlin.

which generally describes a recognition factor that is produced through the continuous and repeated use of individual design or spatial elements.

This of course means that some elements are not designed, while others become a part of the design and are therefore located within the boundaries of the system. With 'Archability', these boundaries are not only extended, but also transferred to other dimensions, which differ from the traditional, visually and haptically-characterised ones, such as design sustainability or quality. In other words, the idea of the corporate design becomes more important than the actual product, as this can be integrated seamlessly thanks to strictly defined framework conditions.

Although the banks are formally completely different, they represent a part of

'Archability' and are thus part of the idea of Raiffeisen. This approach has significant benefits for the individual Raiffeisen banks. As they act independently, which means they are also responsible for their property, they are capable of determining their own room to manoeuvre. Each building is therefore unique, which in turn supports the cooperative, local idea while promoting local business (more than 80% of the investments are made within the region) and enabling extraordinary solutions.

Good construction is not more expensive

Another core concern of Raiffeisen is the provision of support for Swiss art. In many cases the banks, together with the internal Art department of Raiffeisen Switzerland, launch their own art competitions. In 2015, for example, Raiffeisenbank Untersee-Rhein



Banque Raiffeisen Franches-Montagnes in Saignelégier: Extension to a listed building as part of the urban development concept. Foto: Thomas Jantscher Architekturfotografie, Colombier.

received the renowned Prix Visarte for its commitment in relation to an installation by Yves Netzhammer.

The majority of the Raiffeisen renovations and new developments are based on architecture competitions or specific studies. As a constructor, it is important for us to formulate the programme with as much detail as possible, but nevertheless provide the architects involved with as much leeway as possible for making decisions in relation to important aspects. We issue public tenders and choose the participants selectively, in which the criterion of regionalism is very important.

Looking back on 20 years of strong and committed support to the arts and contemporary architecture, we can draw a very positive conclusion. We now know that poor construction is just as expensive as good construction. The individuality of each bank highlights the desire to be and remain local and to cater to the needs of the location and customers. Above all as a bank that predominantly deals with the financing of owner-occupied homes, we like to show our expertise and responsibility when it comes to the planning and construction of buildings.



Customer room at the Raiffeisenbank in Appenzell. In the background, you can see frescos from the 16th century that have been exposed and restored. Foto: Jean-Claude Jossen, St. Gallen.

It is surely no coincidence that Raiffeisen regularly receives prizes and accolades for outstanding examples of valuable, contemporary architecture, both at a national and international level. Further thoughts and impressions regarding architecture can be found at: www.raiffeisen.ch/architektur ●

The Swiss National Bank's head office in Zurich. A new feature on the city's familiar skyline

Evelyn Ingold

The Swiss National Bank's (SNB's) head office in Zurich emerged from a matrix of tensions. This wrangling saw politicians pitted against businesspeople, one city (Zurich) competing against another (Berne), urban modernisers rubbing up against supporters of the status quo – and all this amid the often cumbersome mechanisms of direct democracy.

Two SNB head offices as a compromise between business centre and federal capital

The Swiss National Bank was established at the beginning of the 20th century, which is fairly recent compared to other countries. After the National Bank Act entered into force in January 1906, suitable conditions for operations needed to be created within a short time. This included finding premises for the two head offices in Berne and Zurich.

The fact that the SNB has two head offices – the legal and administrative domicile in Berne and the seat of the Governing Board in Zurich – is the result of a typically Swiss compromise following a hard-fought political debate on the legal form of the SNB. The dispute over whether the central bank should serve mainly private business or the state also affected the choice of domicile. A fine balance had to be found between the interests of Zurich, as the centre of banking, and those of Berne, as the federal capital and seat of government and administration. It was also necessary to strike a balance in the division of powers and responsibilities between the Confederation and the SNB. For political reasons, Berne was given precedence in the construction of head office buildings. Even before appointing the three Governing Board members in 1907, the Federal Council decided that the SNB should be housed in a prestigious building on Bundesplatz square in Berne, where the new parliament buildings had been opened in 1902. For the Confederation, which had taken over a number of new



Swiss National Bank, Berne head office, ca. 1930. Copyright: SNB.

responsibilities from the cantons in the previous few years, constructing imposing public buildings was one way of indicating its rise in importance. The new building at Bundesplatz 1 opened in January 1912, only five years after the SNB had commenced operations. In 2012, to mark the Berne head office's 100th anniversary, a monograph on the history of the building's construction was published by the SNB.¹ The rest of this article will therefore focus on the construction of the Zurich head office.

In contrast to Berne, constructing a suitable building for the SNB in Zurich was no easy matter. Although the city, as Switzerland's most important banking and trading centre, had managed to overcome considerable opposition in its desire to house the second SNB head office, finding an adequate location proved difficult. Once the site had been found in Zurich's budding business district, construction of the planned building was almost blocked by a referendum.

Arduous search for a building location on Bahnhofstrasse

When the SNB launched operations in Basel, Berne, St Gallen and Zurich, the Zurich office

was located in the building of the former Bank in Zürich on Bahnhofstrasse.² After just a few years, however, the premises proved too small. Due to lack of space, the SNB was unable to properly organise its Informationsabteilung (information department), and the statistics unit's employees were 'crammed together in narrow rooms with little light'.³ Finding a suitable site to erect a larger building turned out to be hard. At that time, land for building development in Zurich's prime business area was becoming scarce and increasingly expensive. The SNB was looking for a first-class location 'amid the town's banks, which have all gradually gathered together on and around Bahnhofstrasse', but prices, ranging from CHF 1,100 to CHF 1,500 per square metre, were extremely high, and the last viable site for construction had been snapped up by the Union Bank of Switzerland.⁴

Bahnhofstrasse A municipal development project

In the decades prior to World War I, Zurich's Bahnhofstrasse, which links the railway station and the lake, became the centre of Zurich's business district in connection with the city's



*Swiss National Bank, Zurich head office, ca. 1945.
© SNB. Picture credits: ASNB: GE-ZH-BOER-36.*



Stadthausanlagen park flanked by the River Limmat and Lake Zurich; City of Zurich survey plan, ca. 1910. © and picture credits: City of Zurich architectural history archive.

rapid urban and economic development. Bahnhofstrasse had originally been laid out in the 1860s in a project drawn up by Zurich's municipal engineer, Arnold Bürkli, who addressed the challenges of the fast-growing city by creating a sewerage system, introducing a centralised water supply and planning a tramway network. Arnold Bürkli planned Bahnhofstrasse as a broad boulevard above the filled-in Fröschengraben (frog trench), a former moat alongside the medieval city walls. It was to be a 'splendid' street, but – typically for Zurich – not a 'luxury construction'.⁵

The years of economic upturn following the Franco-German War also saw the area between Bahnhofstrasse, the lake and the Limmat river become a highly desirable location for hotels, businesses, residential property and financial institutions. Five-floor Blockrandbauten (closed terraced blocks), prescribed by the city's building regulations, made for harmonious overall development. Plots sold by the city had to be developed within five years. As a result, what was formerly a poor and 'disorderly' district known as the Kratzquartier was transformed into a planned grid of redeveloped streets.⁶

It was an explicit goal of the municipal authorities that this old city district should lose its former character in the process. The Kratzquartier, with its narrow alleys, angular houses and brothel, had been home to the town's executioners as well as to vagabonds

and other social outcasts. The redevelopment of the entire area finally put an end to its lingering reputation as a scruffy and unsavoury district. Within a few years, labourers' workshops, market stands and a quarantine station for people suspected of having smallpox were replaced by classy shops sporting two-floor-high fronts and prestigious buildings with façades in neo-Renaissance style. A grand café with a glass cupola above the inner courtyard added a big-city – almost Parisian – touch.⁷ Towards the lake front, the district was bordered by a popular little park known as the Stadthausanlagen.

The city makes an offer

South-facing site with lake view available

In 1913, the SNB received several requests to consider quality building plots in Zurich's new business district, possibly due to the economic downturn and banking crisis between 1910 and 1912.⁸ However, the Bank Committee's deliberations, viewings and discussions came to an end when it received an offer from the City of Zurich in January 1914. In the northern part of the Stadthausanlagen park, in the area formerly known as the Kratzquartier at the upper end of Bahnhofstrasse, a 2,000 square metre plot close to the lake had come up for sale at a cost of CHF 500 per square metre. The site was exceptional, as was the price. Indeed, the SNB feared it was so modest that it might

'scandalise senior municipal figures'; it was well aware that, just 10 years earlier, the city's burghers had voted to block the sale of the very same plot of land to make way for a municipal art gallery.⁹

The site in question – the last available building plot in this new part of town – had long been earmarked for development and the city had eventually decided to plant it with trees until a definitive use had been found. As the many fruitless discussions and rejected building plans attest, particular significance was attached to this parcel of land on the southern rim of the city, not least because it enjoyed a panoramic view of the Alps. These mountains, and the myths associated with them, were becoming increasingly integral to Switzerland's national identity around the turn of the century. Zurich's urban planners were looking for an architecturally coherent project to round out this area of town. For its part, the SNB saw the offer as an opportunity to erect a new structure 'whose architecture could rival its sister building in Berne'.¹⁰

Opposition to developing the Stadthausanlagen park and a tight referendum

In the purchase agreement, the SNB committed to building a 'monumental structure' on the site and agreed to launch a public competition for architectural proposals.¹¹ Zurich's Stadtrat (City Council) would have the chance



Markers in the Stadthausanlagen park stake out the site of the new SNB head office in Zurich, March 1919. ©SNB. Picture credits: ASNB: GE-ZH-BOER-172.

to weigh in during the selection process for the definitive project. However, opposition to the sale of the land began to build as the Stadthausanlagen park was much-loved by Zurich's townsfolk.

Anticipating a contentious debate in parliament, the City Council added a passage to the legislative proposal in which it guaranteed to preserve the remaining portion of the Stadthausanlagen park and all of its trees. After a heated discussion, the proposal was adopted by a majority. But the plan's opponents were having none of it and promptly initiated a referendum. This political instrument, which had been anchored in the cantonal constitution since 1869, allowed citizens to demand a referendum on any proposed legislation, provided they could gather a sufficient number of signatures. A referendum on the project was duly held in the summer of 1915, one year after the outbreak of World War I.

Letters to the editor of the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* (NZZ) of the time show that readers considered the prospect of an encroachment on the park to be 'outrageous', as it was one of the few remaining places in the city where people could relax and regenerate. 'Especially over lunch time and after work, virtually all of the benches are occupied,' they argued.¹² Proponents, on the other hand, highlighted the many ways in which the SNB had benefited the population since its foundation – both

in peacetime and, most especially, during the war. 'It is only thanks to the financial strength of the SNB that the federal authorities have been able to manage Switzerland's food supply in such a way that we should be able to get by reasonably well, assuming fate remains on our side.'¹³ This was the line adopted by the City of Zurich. In the various voting documents they also reminded citizens of how hard they had fought to persuade federal authorities of the need for a head office in Zurich. 'The SNB in Berne already has a new and magnificent home in a prime location – indeed it has already moved into these premises. It would be absurd and short-sighted if Zurich were to deny the National Bank a similar building site for its second – and commercially far more significant – head office.'¹⁴

Although virtually all political parties had pushed for a 'yes' vote, the result of the referendum was very close. With 12,961 'yes' and 12,353 'no' votes, the sale of the land to the SNB was approved. But the 'no' camp was not going to take the result lying down. After unsuccessful attempts to appeal the decision at district and cantonal level (Bezirksrat and Regierungsrat respectively), they brought the case before the Federal Supreme Court. Looking back on the episode, one of Zurich's city councillors at the time, Emil Klöti, recalls 'Seldwyla-esque scenes'.¹⁵

The competition

A project by the Pfister brothers carries the day

In spring 1916 an architecture competition was held for the planned bank building. 125 designs were submitted. A proposal by the Pfister brothers, entitled 'Im Kratz', was ranked fifth in the first round, but came first in the second round of the competition; after several modifications, the project was chosen and ultimately built.

The winners of the competition belonged to a generation of modern architects who had made their names by designing functional structures that employed new techniques and materials. However, these two Zurich architects took their cue from historical structures rather than from a particular architectural theory. Pragmatic in style, they sought inspiration in traditional architectural forms and strove to reconcile the old and the new. They were particularly committed to excellent craftsmanship in their designs and were keen to ensure that their buildings chimed with the regional and topographical context. Architecture professor Karl Moser, who taught at the ETH Zurich and in whose Karlsruhe-based architectural office Moser&Curiel Otto Pfister had done his apprenticeship, wrote disparagingly about the pair later in a letter to Le Corbusier.¹⁶ But their proposed mixture of traditional and progressive forms was well received by the



Picture caption 5: The SNB's new Zurich head office under construction, January 1921. © SNB. Picture credits: ASNB: GE-ZH-BOER-199.

contractor, the authorities and the general population. Having designed two department stores and a bank building in baroque and neo-gothic style, the Pfister brothers had already changed the face of Bahnhofstrasse, and their practice would go on to shape Zurich's architecture at the beginning of the 20th century like no other, with municipal and cantonal projects including a railway station, hospitals and cantonal administration buildings.

Construction phase during the post-war crisis

Due to World War I, building work could not commence until the spring of 1919. The moist subsoil on the site, which had once been lakeside terrain, meant an end-to-end reinforced concrete slab had to be used in the foundations. It took three years to erect the monumental but unpretentious cube. The outer walls were made of light shell limestone from Aargau, as stipulated in the competition, and the floor of the vestibule was made of Ticino granite. Various artists were hired to decorate the pillars and cornices of the flat façade with detailed but restrained sculptures. The entrance to the public cashier's counter was positioned underneath the arches on the ground floor, while the offices were located on the upper levels.

The building was a milestone for Zurich in several ways.¹⁷ A prominent, outward-facing structure that marked the end of the city's

expansion in the Kratzquartier between Bahnhofstrasse and Fraumünsterstrasse, it concluded an urban development that had been under way since the middle of the 19th century; during this period, Zurich had moved from being a predominantly riverside to a predominantly lakeside city. Economically, too, the building's construction proved to be a stroke of luck for Zurich. Again and again, people emphasised what a boon the building project had been during a time of crisis, as it had kept 210 local firms and some 330 workers employed for a period of three years.

The total cost of the project was CHF 8 million, around CHF 2.3 million of which was spent on foundations and drainage work alone. The prices of every single task performed by the masons, plasterers, carpenters, stone carvers, decorators and architects were painstakingly logged in a statement of construction costs. Even soap for CHF 4.50, purchased from the Jelmoli department store, was itemised down to the last centime. And at the very end of the list, a marginal note records a tragic incident: 'Furthermore, the SNB left the widow of Johann Emmert, who died in an accident while working on the new building, CHF 589.'¹⁸ The construction worker had been struck by a falling building block and had left behind a wife and four minors.

A monument that embodies core facets of Switzerland's national identity

On the evening of Friday 11 August 1922, the

new SNB building was handed over to its new owners in the presence of the members of the Bank Committee, all the bank's Zurich staff and the building site managers. Even before this opening ceremony, an enthusiastic review had appeared in the NZZ.¹⁹ 'Anyone approaching Zurich by boat will notice a new feature on Zurich's familiar skyline,' it notes. It goes on to praise the building's hipped roof, which 'rises above the existing jumble of higgledy-piggledy roofs'. The reviewer claims that the simple, clean lines of the cubic structure as well as its flat surfaces offer a pleasant contrast to the stock exchange building on the Bahnhofstrasse opposite. While this building presents florid façades 'that are unnecessarily ornate, sheathing the interior and obscuring the surface of the wall almost entirely', in the new SNB building's exterior, it asserts, form follows function. Aside from the ground floor, 'where the wide area housing the public cashier's counter requires intense light (duly supplied by a series of arched windows)', the structure, says the author, has the characteristics of a 'modern office building'. Naturally, a purpose-built, functional solution does not make a work of art. 'While we see functionality as fundamental to successful architecture, it takes the hand of an artist to transform it into something truly aesthetic; to make a virtue of necessity – make something forced into something free.' In the reviewer's eyes, the only section that remained unsatisfactory in this regard was the long edge of the building facing the lake. He bemoans the absence



Picture caption 6: Main entrance to Zurich head office, 2007. © and picture credits: KEYSTONE.

of a suitable transition between the structure and the adjoining park. This shortcoming, he claimed, serves as a painful reminder of the struggle waged by ‘some members of the population to prevent the land from being sold and protect their beloved, ancient trees’. With luck, he wrote, ‘time will heal these wounds’.

Although it was described at the time as functional and modern, there are also echoes of the past in the new SNB building. The tripartite façade and the decorative concept that sees architectural embellishments taper off with each storey is inspired by classical models. The round-arch windows and half-columns flanking the windows on the ground floor reference Italian Renaissance palazzos and are reminiscent of the buildings created by Italian and German banking dynasties during the 14th – 16th centuries.²⁰ Back at the stage when the jury was making its selection, it had made special mention of the open and interesting design of the atrium giving onto the Börsenstrasse, as well as of the public cashier’s counter, which it described as ‘architecturally beautiful and structurally sophisticated’. ‘The artistic qualities of this project – both in terms of its floor plan and its overall organisation – could not be matched by any of the other submissions.’²¹ Typologically, along with the Kreditanstalt (now Credit Suisse) building on Paradeplatz, ‘it is the most monumental example of prestigious bank architecture in the city.’²²

Today, the SNB building in Zurich is

regarded by architectural historians as an expression of ‘moderate Modernism’. While it dispenses with elements of national iconography, the local craftsmanship and technical precision deployed in building this monument embody core facets of Switzerland’s national identity. ‘The Pfister brothers’ neo-classical structure, which shows no trace of folklore or romanticism, set new standards for the decade that followed. Its flat façade, with its arrays of windows and sills projecting horizontality, is topped off with an imposing cubed frieze. The functionality and austerity of the architectural style, typical of this era, offered cultural orientation in an age of uncertainty.’²³

Conclusion

Aesthetically, the architecture of the SNB building is a compromise between tradition and modernity. It marries functionality and monumentality, austerity and adornment, and even manages to blend features of the Italian Renaissance with the hipped roof commonly found in northern Europe. However, politically, too, it is the result of a compromise. The construction process was determined by the at times laborious workings of Swiss direct democracy according to which even the building of a significant national institution must be subject to the will of the local electorate. While not perfect, this system often achieves impressive results that stand the test of time. ●

- 1 Dominique Chloé Baumann, Patrick Halbeisen, Eveline Ruoss, *Die Schweizerische Nationalbank in Bern – eine illustrierte Chronik*, Berne 2012.
- 2 The building was situated on the corner of Bahnhofstrasse and St. Peterstrasse. Bank in Zürich was taken over by Credit Suisse (called Schweizerische Kreditanstalt at the time) in 1906. Cf. Dominique Chloé Baumann, Patrick Halbeisen, Eveline Ruoss, *Die Schweizerische Nationalbank in Bern – eine illustrierte Chronik*, p. 23 et seq.
- 3 Minutes of the Bank Committee meeting of 4 September 1912, p. 7 et seq.
- 4 Ibid. p. 8 et seq.; extract from the minutes of the Governing Board meeting of 1913, 874.
- 5 Werner Huber, *Edition Hochparterre, Bahnhofstrasse Zürich, Geschichte – Gebäude – Geschäfte*, Zurich, 2015, p. 22.
- 6 *Baukultur in Zürich, Schutzwürdige Bauten, Stadtgeschichte und Projekte für die Zukunft, Stadtzentrum, Altstadt/City, Amt für Städtebau* (publisher), Zurich, 2012, p. 134.
- 7 Isabelle Meier, ‘Von Bööggwerken und Zunftumzügen, Vom Fest zum Spektakel’, in: *Lücken im Panorama, Einblicke in den Nachlass Zürichs, Geschichtsladen Zürich* (Herausgeber), Zurich 1986; Fast wie in Paris, *Die Umgestaltung des Kratzquartiers um 1880, Amt für Städtebau* (publisher), Zurich, 2001.
- 8 Jakob Tanner, *Geschichte der Schweiz im 20. Jahrhundert*, C.H. Beck, Munich 2015, p. 117.
- 9 Minutes of the Bank Committee meeting of 11 February 1914, p. 55.
- 10 Ibid., p. 56.
- 11 Decision of Zurich’s City Parliament (Grosser Stadtrat) of 13 March 1915, Zurich City Archives, City Council directives 1915, 1916.
- 12 NZZ, no. 234 of 27 February 1915.
- 13 Ibid.
- 14 City Parliament decision of 13 March 1915.
- 15 ‘Wie die Nationalbank zu ihrem Bauplatz kam, Plauderei von Emil Klöti’, *Volksrecht* (newspaper), no. 263, 8 November 1961.
- 16 They were, he claimed, exponents of a typically Swiss brand of ‘mediocrity and inadequacy’, *archithese*, no. 1, 1993, editorial; cf. also Bruno Maurer, Dominique von Burg, *Eine Architektur des Konsenses, Die Gebrüder Otto (1880–1959) und Werner Pfister (1884–1950) ibid.*; ‘Von der nationalen Romantik zu einer moderaten Moderne’, NZZ of 15 October 2001.
- 17 Sabine Felder, ‘Die Nationalbank in Zürich (1919–22)’, *archithese*, no. 1, 1993.
- 18 Statement of construction costs for the new SNB building in Zurich, Zurich 1923; excerpt from the minutes of the Governing Board no. 816 of 16 September 1920.
- 19 NZZ, no. 1648 of 18 November 1921.
- 20 Dominique von Burg, Gebrüder Pfister, *Architektur für Zürich 1907–1950*, p. 188 ff.
- 21 Jury report for the new bank building in Zurich, 4 June 1917.
- 22 Sabine Felder, see above.
- 23 *Baukultur in Zürich*, p. 197.

A courtly home. Münzhof, UBS's head office

Christian Leitz

Introduction

Known as Münzhof (the aptly named Court of Coins or Mint – an allusion to a mint that used to be located in nearby Augustine's Church), UBS's head office on Bahnhofstrasse 45, Zurich, is undergoing the most comprehensive renovation in its history. In fact, the middle of the three-year refurbishment, begun in October 2015, will mark Münzhof's centenary. It was, after all, in 1917 that the then Union Bank of Switzerland (Union Bank) first took up residency there.

And the building retained its importance after Union Bank merged with Swiss Bank Corporation (SBC) in 1998 into today's UBS, the largest world-class wealth manager and the leading universal bank in Switzerland, complemented by a strong and focused investment bank and institutional asset manager.

Infancy

When the Münzhof opened, Union Bank was itself only five years old. The bank was established in 1912 through a merger of the Bank in Winterthur, originally founded precisely fifty years earlier in 1862, and the Toggenburger Bank, founded just one year later. The new bank clearly intended to establish itself in the burgeoning city of Zurich with an imposing physical presence.

Bank in Winterthur first gained a foothold in Zurich in 1906 by taking over a branch of the Bank in Baden, located at Bahnhofstrasse 44, adjacent to the site destined to house Münzhof ten years later. The location provided easy access to Zurich's stock exchange, which, after its foundation in 1880, became the most important in Switzerland during the first half of the 20th century and contributed to Zurich becoming the financial and economic center of Switzerland.

Moreover, the acquisition was of vital business relevance because it meant membership for the Winterthur-based bank among the Cartel of Swiss Banks (established in 1897) – and thus participation of the bank in the issuing of bonds by the Cartel. In architectural



Bahnhofstrasse, Zurich, about 1910, Villa zum Grabengarten (left-hand side). © UBS.

terms, the Bank in Winterthur left a lasting legacy on Bahnhofstrasse 44 building by adding its (current) ground floor aspect in 1910. Toggenburger Bank, on the other hand, remained fully focused on Eastern Switzerland, without any presence in Zurich at all prior to the 1912 merger with Bank in Winterthur.

During the First World War Zurich's role as an international financial center increased substantially with, as the authors of the 1962 Union Bank anniversary book put it, foreign exchange transactions flourishing on an unprecedented scale. In fact, responding to this development, Union Bank itself created a separate foreign exchange department in Zurich.

Location

Looking at Bahnhofstrasse today with its grand buildings, it's difficult to imagine that in the mid-19th century it was still dominated by family houses and gardens. One of these was the villa and gardens of the patrician's family Schinz. And it faced not Bahnhofstrasse, which came into existence in the 1860s, but Fröschengraben (Frogs' Ditch), a literal reference to the ditch that had, since the 13th century, run from there the (short) distance to

Lake Zurich. The name of the Schinz's home, Villa zum Grabengarten (Villa By The Ditch Garden) was therefore very apt. In the 1860s the Fröschengraben was canalized and covered over, the construction of the new Zurich train station commenced – and the street leading to and from the city's main train station came into proper shape.

Construction

The first official step towards the construction of Münzhof – and the demolition of Villa zum Grabengarten – came in February 1913 when a 'Genossenschaft Münzhof' was registered in Zurich for the explicit purpose of purchasing and building over the site Bahnhofstrasse 43/45. This was followed by Union Bank of Switzerland tasking a renowned bureau of architects, Pflughard & Haefeli, to plan and construct the building.

Both born in 1869, Otto Pflughard and Max Haefeli met as students at the ETH Zurich. In 1897 Pflughard took over an established firm of architects in Zurich and, a year later, Haefeli joined him as partner in the firm. By the time they were contracted by Union Bank of Switzerland they had already firmly established themselves as leading architects,

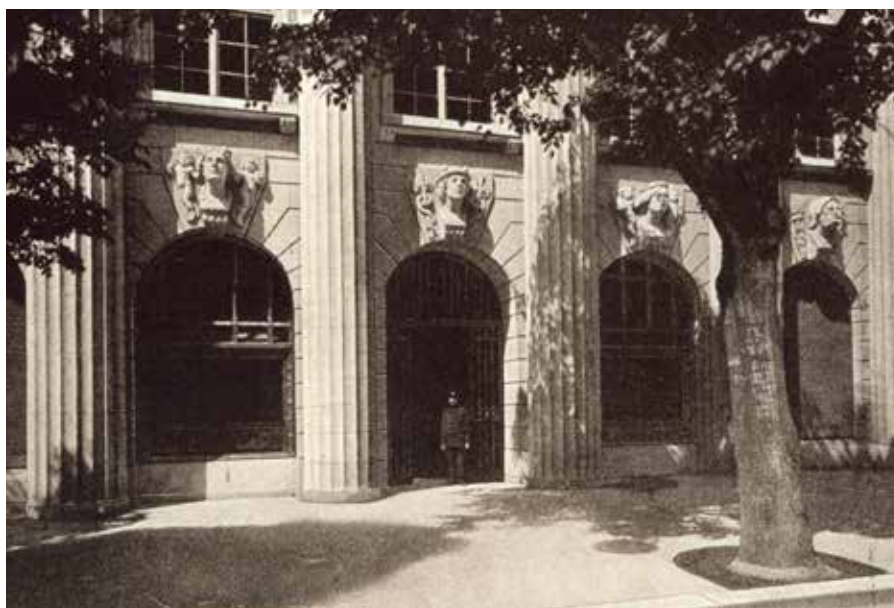
notably through buildings in both Zurich and St. Gallen. Jointly, they would in fact construct about 200 buildings.

Pflegard & Haefeli had clearly been instructed to plan big and compete in size with other banks' buildings in Zurich, not least the nearby head office of Credit Suisse, built in the 1870s on the corner of Paradeplatz and Bahnhofstrasse. Neoclassicism was the chosen style and the building was to include six massive, three-story-high Doric columns before the front facade of the building. If solidity and imperturbability were to be the hallmarks of the new construction (and the bank it was to host), then this was clearly achieved, including also by the dressed rusticated ashlar and ornate ironwork on the windows and doors. The entire façade was done in St. Margrethen sandstone, including also the five allegorical heads it prominently features. Created by Jakob Brüllmann, a famous Swiss-born sculptor (though then long resident of Stuttgart), they represent Industry (hammer, pliers, fire), Agriculture (fruits and children), Trade (cap, wings and rod), Science (owl), and Military (sword and arrows in quiver).

Expansion

On 2 June 1917 Union Bank moved into its new Münzhof building. While Winterthur (from the former Bank in Winterthur) and St. Gallen (from the former Toggenburger Bank) remained the head offices of the bank, Zurich rapidly gained in importance. Already in 1918 the bank's Central Accounting Department was moved from Winterthur to Zurich. And, significantly, the Board of Directors completely abandoned its previous schedule of meetings in Winterthur and St. Gallen, to meet in Münzhof only.

It was not, however, until 1945 that Union Bank moved its head office to Zurich. It was a year of substantial expansion for the bank with the absorption of a large but troubled competitor, Eidgenössische Bank (EIBA, Federal Bank, founded in 1863) taking its total assets to 1.5 billion Swiss francs. At the very same Extraordinary General Meeting that the decision was taken to take over EIBA, Union Bank also decided on the move of its head office to Zurich (and its Münzhof building). This reflected the city's establishment as Switzerland's leading financial center and the resulting shift of Union Bank's major business activities.



Entry, Münzhof, Bahnhofstrasse 45, about 1917. © UBS.



Union Bank of Switzerland head office, Bahnhofstrasse 45, Zurich, mid-1950s. © UBS.



Corner of Bahnhofstrasse and Pelikanstrasse, Zurich, 1957. © UBS.

In 1962, Union Bank had good reason to celebrate its 100th anniversary (and also the 50th anniversary of the Bank in Winterthur / Toggenburger Bank merger) in style – and with a much enlarged head office. An enormous expansion project commenced in the mid-1950s had come to its conclusion in time for the anniversary year. The project, split into two expansion phases, was led by renowned architects Ernst Witschi and son Bruno, though – following Ernst Witschi's death in 1959 – the second phase was completed by G. Landtwing and H. Walter.

Münzhof was no longer confined to the building opened in 1917, but consisted of an entire complex encompassing parts of Pelikanstrasse and Nüscherstrasse. By 1987, the estimated land size of Union Bank's head office amounted to 10,000 m² (with a then estimated value of CHF 400 million).

And there was plenty of work for the many employees working in the Münzhof complex – as indeed was the case for other Swiss banks, including SBC. The Basel-headquartered bank had opened its first building in Zurich in 1899 (one year after it had



Counter hall of UBS head office, Bahnhofstrasse 45, Zurich, 2012. © UBS.

become the first Swiss bank to open a branch in London, the then leading financial center of the world). In the 1950s, it had this building demolished to make way for a new office building, unveiled in 1960. As it is located on Paradeplatz, the square eponymously denoted as Zurich's financial center, the building is today sometimes erroneously referred to as UBS's head office.

In 1946, the Swiss branch network of the Grossbanken, including Union Bank, amounted to only 20 percent of the overall amount of Swiss bank branches, but this was to grow to 40 percent within less than 25 years. Union Bank was (like SBC) busy acquiring a number of smaller Swiss banks and opening new branches. It increased its total number of branches and agencies in Switzerland to 159 by the end of 1970, including, in October 1970, Switzerland's first below-the-ground bank agency, located in Zurich main train station's new underground shopping complex, and thus only ten minutes' walk or one tram stop away from Münzhof. The latter provided the central 'hub' for all these branches and agencies – and for an international expansion, which would give the bank representation across all continents.

Not surprisingly, employee numbers swelled markedly in the years following Union Bank's 100th anniversary celebrations. The payroll increased from just under

4,000 employees in 1960 to almost 10,000 in 1970 (of which almost half were younger than 25). This development led the bank to introduce new working arrangements. In 1962, the Union Bank of Switzerland introduced the uninterrupted workday, the 45-minute lunch break – and its first staff restaurant, on Nüscherstrasse in direct vicinity to its head office and now firmly integrated in the entire building complex that originated in Münzhof.

Today's full aspect of the building complex (encompassing Bahnhofstrasse 45 and 47, Pelikanstrasse 9 and 11 and Nüscherstrasse 10, jointly under protection order by Zurich City) was completed in the 1990s. Two years before the merger that joined together Union Bank and SBC, the former had further expanded the complex.

Transition

During the current renovation of Bahnhofstrasse 45, the branch normally located there has been relocated around the corner to Pelikanstrasse. Of particular interest is the digital artwork 'Ways to Fortune' by artist Daniel Boschung. The installation offers a very special client experience and a new form of client communication by letting visitors to the Pelikanstrasse branch create their very own individual artwork.

As clients travel along the 'Ways to Fortune' from the lobby to the upper floor,

they create an individual pattern in various colors and shapes based on how they walk. This image is projected in real time on the large screens in the lobby. As a memento, UBS clients are given a personalized card with the image they created, which also tells them about how they can invest in children's wellbeing and future through the UBS Optimus Foundation.

Future

The renovation will include comprehensive technological and security upgrades, and will enhance the building's role in the urban environment. Furthermore, plans are in place to revitalize Münzhof with a café on Bahnhofstrasse. Attractive commercial space will be created on the ground floor along Bahnhofstrasse and Pelikanstrasse. In addition, UBS plans to ensure long-term flexibility of use through the various independent entry points to the bank and the stores. The project is led by Zurich-based architects EM2N.

UBS has a comprehensive environmental strategy and is committed to securing LEED Platinum certification for the renovated building – the highest level according to the international standard for environmentally friendly, resource-efficient and sustainable building. UBS is therefore improving the shell and technology of the listed building from an energy standpoint to significantly reduce future energy consumption. Care will also be taken to use mainly environmentally friendly and low-pollutant construction materials.

Bahnhofstrasse 45 will remain closed throughout the entire renovation, which is planned to be completed in the second half of 2018. The main hall of the building, recognized as a 'cultural history monument of the first order' in a 1995 curator of monuments' assessment, will be carefully renovated and brought in line with the latest advisory and design concept. UBS has largely implemented this already in all of its approximately 300 branches in Switzerland. ●

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Making and Meaning of a Versicherungs-Palast. The historical headquarters of Zurich Insurance

Christofer Stadlin

A success story and a canceled tenancy contract

Founded in 1872 as a transport insurance and re-insurance company Zurich entered the fields of accident and liability insurance in 1875, which were destined to become its sole activity after transport insurance was terminated in 1880. Immediately, Zurich expanded its accident and liability business internationally. By the end of 1875 there were agencies, general agencies or branch offices established in Germany, the Austria-Hungarian Empire, and all of the Scandinavian states existing at the time (DK, N, S). Belgium followed in 1877, France and the Netherlands in 1878, Italy in 1881 and the first wave of international expansion concluded in 1884 with the opening of an agency in Barcelona, Spain. A million Swiss francs in annual premium income was achieved in 1880. For the next twenty years Zurich's business grew vigorously by a yearly average of 14% and by the turn of the century the company had become one of the greatest accident and liability insurance companies on the European continent¹. That this remarkable success story would have justified or even demanded the establishment of premises owned by the company to host its headquarters is an argument that does not appear in the internal records documenting the construction of a splendid building at Mythenquai in Zürich from 1899 to 1901. It was left to the press to take it up: The gorgeous new headquarters actually correspond to the business of the company, which by its territorial expansion, results and the size of its portfolios takes the first place among continental companies in its industry².

Even though there are no exact numbers it can be assumed that the staff employed at



The Headquarters of Zurich Insurance Company Ltd. at Mythenquai 2 in Zürich photographed from the lake side park. Note that the church Enge, constructed in 1894, visible on the right side of the building, has been airbrushed into the picture in as much as it cannot normally be seen from this perspective. This picture was shared throughout the Zurich organization to reinforce its corporate identity especially with foreign offices. © Zurich Corporate Archives.

the headquarters in Zürich must have grown somehow in line with the business. The first offices of Zurich had been located at Bahnhofstrasse, the representative avenue built on the filled up trenches of the medieval city fortification. The street, which connected the main railway station with the lakeside, had become famous as the home of some of Switzerland's largest banks. Around 1880 Zurich moved to the newly erected building of the Schweizerische Kreditanstalt, today's Credit Swiss at Paradeplatz, another spot famous in banking.

The second half of the 19th century was an era of rapid economic growth for the Swiss economy in general and particularly its financial services sector³. Not only insurers expanded, banks did as well and so it could not have

come as a complete surprise when Credit Swiss informed Zurich in spring 1898 that it could not prolong the tenancy agreement for the offices at Paradeplatz as the bank needed them for its own personnel⁴.

Finding the right spot

In view of this situation the Zurich board of directors decided to erect a building on its own. An adequate location was found not far away from Paradeplatz in Zürich Enge. Zürich Enge had come into being in 1894 by the integration of the formerly independent municipality Enge into the City of Zürich. A construction boom had taken off there since the mid-1880s. Enge was considered to be the natural area of expansion for the City as it was a mostly flat space stretching south along the shores of lake Zürich. Furthermore the area had been

1 On the development of Zurich business: Stadlin, C., Historical roots of the Zurich Brand 1872 – 1947, internal paper (Zürich 2008), pp. 4-5.

2 ZAZ 591 Div. Unterlagen zur Geschichte der ZÜRICH 1872-1998, Zürcher Wochenchronik, April 27, 1901, Corporate Archives, Zurich Insurance Group, Zürich [hereafter Zurich Archive].

3 For an introduction into the history of the Swiss financial services see e.g. Breiding, R.J., Schwarz, G., Wirtschaftswunder Schweiz Ursprung und Zukunft eines Erfolgsmodells (Zürich 2011), pp. 105-161.

4 ZAZ 63732, Protokolle des Ausschuss des Verwaltungsrates, Sitzung 13. Mai 1898, Zurich Archive.



View of the alps and the new business and residential areas of the City of Zürich stretching alongside the lake of Zürich. The picture is printed on stock certificates of the Zurich Insurance Company Ltd: On the right side the Alpenquai with the City Concert Hall, the Red and White Castle, the Headquarters of Swiss Life and Church Enge are to be seen as well as Zurich's new headquarters on Mythenquai, all with lake side parks in the foreground; On the left the so-called Seefeld area with the Opera house. The ensemble does not depict reality. While Seefeld is directed eastwards towards the Alps as seen in the picture, the Alpenquai is directed southwards and is not visible from the point of view the picture actually takes. But this distortion of reality seems to be the message of the picture: Zurich Insurance Company Ltd., originating in Zürich, the modern business city in the Alps. © Zurich Corporate Archives.

massively enlarged by the way of continued fillings of the lake since the 1830s. Over a hundred new buildings were erected over a period of fifteen years (1885-1900). Most of them were combined residential and business buildings, much sought after by the bourgeois business elite of the City, longing to escape the narrowness and inconveniences of the old town. Zürich Enge transformed radically from a rural to a mundane metropolitan area⁵. Especially on the Alpenquai (today General Gusain Quai), one of the new boulevards at the lakeside, a number of prestigious projects were realized. Most notably the new city concert hall, the headquarters of the Schweizerische Rentenanstalt (today's Swiss Life) and the so-called White and Red Castle (two large residential buildings with luxury apartments providing the latest state-of-the-art facilities including: a central heating system, electric lighting, hydraulic elevators, waste disposal chutes, running water, lavatories, etc). It was actually there, in close vicinity of the Alpenquai, at the corner of Alfred-Escher-Platz and Mythenquai that Zurich, on July 12, 1898, acquired a building plot of about 2300 square meters⁶. But this happened only after the entire board had visited the site and deemed it fit for purpose. It was also decided that the new building would only house the offices of the company itself as well as some apartments for rent. Architects were

invited to develop and present their projects. On November 18, only six months after the issue had been discussed for the first time, the board selected the project of Julius Kunkler from a total of three submissions⁷. The decision was also based on the advice of an expert panel that had been nominated by the company and included, among others, the master mason of the City. The actual construction started in March 1899.

A welcomed construction

To establish a base able of stabilizing the filled-up former lake floor and of bearing the weight of the projected building, 8000 wooden poles had to be rammed into the ground. In summer 1899 a further architect was hired to supervise the construction work and especially to check the building materials. The construction seems to have gone smoothly. At least in so far as the only further discussion regarding the project recorded in the board minutes concerned the installation of a safe room. One and a half years after the start of construction, the chairman could open the meeting of the board committee on October 30, 1900 by welcoming its members to the new building of the company⁸. And two days later on November 2 the meeting of the board was rounded off with a visit to the new offices⁹. It took another six months to complete the building, especially the art work on the façades. But then it was

done. Twenty eight years after its foundation Zurich had its own headquarters.

The press was euphoric: When looking from the Quai-bridge over and above the trees populating the parks along the lake-side towards Enge, the eye catches sight of a long stretched building of especially noble architecture. None of the larger corporations at home in the city of Zürich can pride themselves with more beautiful and more beautifully situated business premises. When also the brilliant business results the company regularly achieves are taken into account, one involuntarily develops the wish to become an employee and maybe even spend a lifetime under the protecting roof of the insurance palace¹⁰.

Architecture of an insurance palace

Insurance palace is the keyword. The building is of a basically rectangular form. The front façade is dominated by four Corinthian columns centered in the middle and flanked by two towers rising above the roof and running down the entire façade. The columns reach across the second and third floors and carry a temple-like pediment, on top of which a group of sculptures sits. The complex of columns, pediment and sculptures is positioned above the main entrance, the mezzanine ground and first floors. Together with the towers, they really do create a monumental impression. At the same time these details accentuate the separation of floors foreseen for the actual offices of the company (mezzanine and first) from the second and third

5 For the (building) history of the Enge area see: Guyer, P., Geschichte der Enge (Zürich 1980); Amt für Städtebau Zürich (ed.), Baukultur in Zürich Vol. 5: Enge, Wollishofen, Leimbach (Zürich 2006).

6 ZAZ 62740, Protokolle des Verwaltungsrates, Sitzung 12. Juli 1898, Zurich Archive.

7 Ibidem, Sitzung 18, November 1898, Zurich Archive.

8 ZAZ 63732, Protokolle des Ausschuss des Verwaltungsrates, Sitzung 30. Oktober 1900, Zurich Archive.

9 ZAZ 62740, Protokolle des Verwaltungsrates, Sitzung 2. November 1900, Zurich Archive.

10 Note 2, Ibid.



View on the narrow side of the building, decorated on the occasion of the visit of the German Emperor Wilhelm II to Switzerland in 1912. Note in the background on the left the new headquarters of Swiss Re on Mythenquai under construction from 1911-1913. © Zurich Corporate Archives.

floors where a total of six luxury apartments were located. These offered the same conveniences like the ones described above in regard to the White and Red castle. The separation between business and apartment floors is taken up on the northern narrow side of the building, oriented towards the city centre, the direction from where visitors would normally approach it. There, on the second floor, sustained by richly decorated ledges stretching down to the first floor, is a balcony which on each side carries two smaller, closely attached Corinthian columns, again crossing the second and third storeys.

Palace-like features are also present inside the building, especially in the lobby and the stairway to the first floor. An out-sized door combining wrought ironwork with glass flanked by Dorian marble pillars opens to a first stairway leading to the mezzanine floor. On the mezzanine the entrance enlarges into a lobby hall and a flight of stairs in the style of a Renaissance palazzo. The first stairway of the flight, similar to the entrance door flanked by marble pillars but by two on each side, leads to an intermediate level. There it splits into two stairways, one to the right and

one to the left, each of them passing a second intermediate level to the first floor. The first intermediate level arrives at the back of the building, which is opened up by large windows covered with art deco glass paintings. The largest window, right above the intermediate level, displays the Zurich lion, the coat of arms of the City, which the company also used as logo on policy forms and prospectuses until at least the 1930s.

It is interesting to note that the building of the Gothaer Lebensversicherung, (Gothaer Life Insurance Company) a classical Insurance Palace in its own right erected in the city of Gotha in 1894, used very similar architectural concepts: A front facade with tower like structures; columns and an entrance hall with the same Renaissance like flights of stairs connecting the mezzanine with the first floor¹¹.

Overall the building, the representative façades with their columns and the entrance area, is clearly neoclassical in style with elements of historicism (e.g. the heads decorating the ledges) and art deco

(e.g. the figure group on the roof on the narrow side, the ironwork of the main door, and the glass paintings).

A point of reference

The appearance of the building pointedly transcends the features of a mere residential one, an aspect which the report of the panel of experts explicitly noted. The building fulfills its purpose of housing the headquarters of a great and successful company. The massive overall structure, together with the palace-like features assembled in the middle (the towers, the monumental columns, the main entrance, the sculpture group, the highly decorated entrance) broadcast seriousness, wealth and power. These qualities are of special importance for an insurance company that basically trades in trust: The promise to pay out (significant) sums of money sometime in the future should adverse events occur. Accordingly, the new headquarters started to become a common motif on prospectuses of the company up to the 1960s as well as a point of reference for the company's corporate identity.

The message: Private social insurance

¹¹ See: <http://www.versicherungsgeschichte.de/museum/historische-entwicklung/entstehung-versicherungswesen/versicherungspalast-der-gruenderzeit.html>, accessed on January 8, 2016.



The sculpture group in the workshop of the artist (1900). © Zurich Corporate Archives.

While the press interpreted the building primarily as a self-confident expression of business success, one article¹² added further aspects: First, the progressive character of accident and liability insurance; Second, how Zurich itself had advanced the development of these lines of business; Finally, the sense of commercial responsibility expressed in the business conduct and business policy of Zurich. Seen from these angles the building could also be interpreted as a palace, a temple or simply a symbol of social progress based on and furthered by private initiative and enterprise.

The allegorical sculpture group on top of the centre of the façade corresponds to such an interpretation. It depicts in a clear fashion the so-called workmen's compensation, the collective insurance of entire workforces against the risks inherent in industrial production. The sculpture depicts a killed or at least heavily injured worker lying on the ground, identified as such by a bare upper body and a tool in his hand, his daughter or wife knelling before a female figure signified as a goddess by her classical design. The naked torso and a Greek style helmet are evocative of the Greek goddess Athena. In

her right arm the statuette holds the horn of plenty symbolizing the monetary compensation provided by insurance while beckoning those seeking relief with her left. Even though workmen's compensation was the main line of business of the company in terms of premium income around 1900, it was nevertheless only one amongst others: personal accident, liability and burglary insurance. Choosing workmen's compensation for the purpose of self-portrayal was a clear statement; how the company wanted to be understood by the public: Social insurance provided by private enterprise.

Such a statement is no coincidence considering that just in the year 1900 the first attempt by the progressive political forces of Switzerland and the progressive members of the Swiss parliament towards the nationalization of collective accident insurance had taken place. These sought to lay the cornerstone for a public social insurance scheme with the introduction of the so-called Federal Sickness and Accident Insurance Law (Kranken-Unfall-Versicherungs-Gesetz). It failed dramatically in a popular vote, which is typical for the Swiss system of direct democracy¹³. ●



The flight of stairs leading from the mezzanine to first floor, which is visible in the background of the gallery on the first floor. This is where former CEO and Chairman Fritz Gerber presented the video installation 'Fire Piece' by Korean artist Nam June Paik in 1994. For Gerber the contrast of the neoclassical and art deco interior with the video installation perfectly expressed the challenges facing an insurance company like Zurich as it stepped into the 21st century: coping with the risks of the post-industrial age with experience reaching back to the start of the industrial revolution. Note the first intermediate level where the stairs split as well as the glass paintings on the windows in the back wall, with the Zurich lion dominating the centre. © Zurich Corporate Archives.

12 Note 2, Ibid. Zürcher Kalender 1901.

13 See: Leimgruber, M., *Solidarity without the state?: business and the shaping of the Swiss welfare state, 1890-2000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2008), p. 43.

Unpopular icon of the 1960s. The headquarters of de Nederlandsche Bank in Amsterdam

Gert Eijkelboom

Long before Queen Juliana of the Netherlands opened it in May 1968, the new headquarters of De Nederlandsche Bank (DNB) on Frederiksplein in Amsterdam had been a highly controversial building – not just because of its business-like and ultra-modern design by architect Marius Duintjer, but also because of its location on the edge of the historic city centre and the jarring size of the large office complex. Many buildings dating back to this era have since been pulled down or given facelifts, making the DNB building one of the few remaining examples of the architecture of its day with some style. In the nearly five decades of its existence, it has undergone two major extensions and various other rebuilds detracting from Duintjer's original design. Even after 50 years, many people in Amsterdam still don't like the building much, and the older generation looks longingly back to the stunning glass-and-iron Paleis voor Volksvlijt that graced this spot up until 1929.

Established in 1813, the headquarters of De Nederlandsche Bank (DNB) had been based at Amsterdam's Oude Turfmarkt until the opening of the new building in 1968. This part of town is still dominated by the former bank building, dating back to the seventeenth century. DNB's steady growth had quickly made these early offices too small for its needs, and it soon started using neighbouring properties. In the 1865-69 period, this complex of buildings underwent major conversion and refurbishment, and was given a new, stately and rather austere monumental facade, designed by the engineer and architect Willem Anthonie Froger (1812-1883). DNB kept growing, though, and many renovations and extensions were yet to follow.

By the early 1950s, it had become clear that DNB's accommodation was no longer fit for purpose and that something drastic had to be done. Initially, the Governing Board resolved to commission a new build at Oude Turfmarkt, and in 1954 it invited six prominent



Figure 1: The renovated first buildings of DNB in the oldest part of the city (Turfmarkt) in 1949. Foto: De Nederlandsche Bank.

architects to submit designs to an architectural competition. The Board was well aware that a plan on this scale would have a major impact on this location in one of the oldest parts of Amsterdam, but in 1957 it nevertheless picked the ultra-modern design by Marius Duintjer (1908-1983).¹

Bidding adieu to Oude Turfmarkt

While the architects were working on their competition designs, DNB's Governing Board and Amsterdam's city council were negotiating a possible land swap, which involved De Nederlandsche Bank getting the building site at Frederiksplein in return for the complex of buildings at Oude Turfmarkt. The Frederiksplein site had fallen into disuse ever since the illustrious Paleis voor Volksvlijt, Amsterdam's answer to London's Crystal Palace, had gone up in flames in 1929.

The city council's plans to build a new city hall and later an opera house had all come to nothing. Extensive negotiations ended in a swap between the two players in October 1959 without any money changing hands.²

The deal received a frosty welcome from the newspapers and the general public,

especially as it put paid to the chances of an opera house being built on Frederiksplein. It was decried as a victory for capital and a powerful central bank over art, with many fearing a dead and closed-off monstrosity that would ruin Frederiksplein forever.³ The city council was reproached for kowtowing too much to De Nederlandsche Bank and ignoring the public interest.

A new head office at Frederiksplein

Early in 1959 and well before the deal was actually in the bag, the competition's winner Duintjer was commissioned to return to the drawing board and produce initial designs for a new head office at Frederiksplein. This early design had virtually nothing in common with the winning design for the Oude Turfmarkt building. At Frederiksplein, the area actually available for building was much smaller, but Amsterdam's city council was amenable to high-rise buildings here on the edge of the old city centre, whereas it had not been at Oude Turfmarkt. What is more, DNB's schedule of requirements put limits on distances within the building. This, coupled with less than ample building space, inevitably spelled high rise.



Figure 3: Duintjer's first rough design dated 1960 for the new building at Frederiksplein, seen from southwest. Foto: De Nederlandsche Bank.

Duintjer undertook extensive research before submitting his design for this new location, and visited a number of other central banks in 1957 at the express request of the Board. The governors had not been entirely pleased with Duintjer's two designs for the new build at Oude Turfmarkt, as they felt that a bank that issues and circulates money on behalf of the government should not be too grand or ostentatious, and they saw room for improvement in Duintjer's plans. One of their objections, for instance, was that too much room was given over to the representative areas relative to the rooms where the actual work would be done.

It seems plausible that Duintjer's design for the bank building at Frederiksplein harked back to a 1937 design for a new city hall in exactly the same spot by a group of architects – Huig Maaskant (1907-1977), Willem van Tijen (1894-1974), Mart Stam (1899-1986) and Lotte Stam-Beese (1903-1988). There are also striking similarities with the New York head office of Lever Brothers Company (Lever House), which had been completed in 1952. This complex of buildings consists of a slender tower of 24 floors taking up only one-quarter of the available land area and placed atop a low-rise base of two floors placed on pillars. In May 1952, Holland's daily newspaper *Algemeen Handelsblad* had called Lever House a 'beacon of aesthetic beauty, efficiency and hygiene'.⁴ In 1960, DNB awarded the design

contract to Duintjer.

No impregnable fortress

From the very start, openness and transparency were rated as key qualities for the new building. On the face of it, these requirements were at odds with the strict security needs of the money and gold stored in the vaults, which really required as 'closed' a building as possible. And yet, the Board of Governors did not want an 'impregnable fortress surrounded by menacing bars of a lifeless closedness'. Besides, state-of-the-art security systems obviated the need to demonstrate that security was accounted for. As the then DNB President Jelle Zijlstra observed at a press conference marking the building's opening in 1968: 'Those taking an undue interest are certainly prepared to assume that such security measures have indeed been taken.'

Duintjer pulled the Bank's multiple functions together in a 15-metre low-rise box of three floors, combining this with a fairly slender high-rise section of 15 floors totalling over 66 metres in height, which split the open courtyard in two. The low-rise section covered the full building plot of 100 by 120 metres, and was at its deepest on the north side of the complex. The ground floor was four metres high while the first floor – which contained the cash-counting area – was given an impressive height of eight metres. The receding floor above it housed the large staff

restaurant and sports facilities.

The other wings of the low-rise section rested on free-standing columns, and Duintjer envisaged other representative rooms and offices on the east and west sides of the building. The main floor in the south wing overlooking Singelgracht was home to the offices and reception rooms of the Governing Board.

The close to 70-metre-high tower was set aside primarily for the administrative back-office departments. The outer wall of the high-rise building inches inwards by some two centimetres on every consecutive floor, adding up to a total 30 centimetres towards the top and contributing to the high-rise's more slender feel. Another optical correction is that the high-rise window areas gradually lose height as the floors ascend.

The reddish-brown tiling of the low-rise building and of the parapets in the high-rise reflect back the colours of the surrounding cityscape. Note that Duintjer initially proposed charcoal black instead of 'Amsterdam brown' for the stoneware tiles.

Duintjer placed the main entrance in the west courtyard, explaining his choice as follows: 'Giving the main entrance a courtyard that to some extent reflects back surrounding buildings, offers a better opportunity for this modest and little used main entrance to make an impression than if it were on the large and busy Frederiksplein. The fact that this puts the main entrance in the high rise dominating



Figure 2: Paleis voor Volksvlijt at the Frederiksplein site in the 1920s from the northwest. Foto: De Nederlandsche Bank.



Figure 4: Aerial photo of the new building of DNB at the south edge of the historical city centre in 1968. Foto: De Nederlandsche Bank.

the entire complex will [...] be accepted as only natural.'

Duintjer's 1961 provisional design was warmly received by both DNB's Governing Board and the board of the city council, and the project was given the go-ahead. Early in December of 1961, Amsterdam's mayor Gijs van Hall drove the first pile into the ground. In his speech, DNB's then President Marius Holtrop had no doubt that the new building would be a jewel of the Frederiksplein and the city as a whole and he predicted it would showcase Amsterdam's position as a financial centre. The mayor expressed the hope that others would follow in the central bank's footsteps and locate in the area, with the financial district expanding in this area of town.

The actual build took six years and five months, with the severe winter of 1962-63 and a strike in the construction industry in 1964 causing a total delay of six months.

On 7 May 1968, Queen Juliana officially opened the building, which had been in partial use for a while by that time. Receiving the press at its new head office, DNB President Jelle Zijlstra called it the most modern and probably most secure central bank in the world. At the time, the building was among the best equipped in Europe.

Integration into its environment

The building's location at Frederiksplein, on the edge of the historic city centre and just

inside of Singelgracht, begs the question whether its high-rise aspect does not overly disrupt the townscape. Duintjer felt it did not: 'Frederiksplein is adjacent to the old heart of the city of Amsterdam, one of the most beautiful city centres in Europe. Does it enhance the city's overall appearance to build this high on the edge? We believe that it does! A circle of high-rise, slender buildings along Singelgracht right around the old core of the city could enrich and rejuvenate the city's overall appearance – a change to the familiar aspect of the low buildings so typical of the inner city area, but not a detraction. The high rises making up this circle should be well spaced, not a tight ring of tall buildings giving the impression of closing off the inner city from the new city!'

Duintjer's words capture the post-war mindset of innovation that dominated the optimistic 1950s and 1960s. Amsterdam's city councillors were likewise coming up with grand designs that were to lead to major traffic breakthroughs – some of which actually did make it off the drawing board to be implemented. Very soon, though, the city council realised that dramatic urban development was very much at odds with the desire to retain the beauty of the small-scale inner city, and the growing resistance to high-rise cityscaping led it to change its policies from the early 1970s. It resolved to retain the city's residential pull as well

as its position as a business and entertainment centre, while respecting its historical nature. These new policies soon became dominant and the basic tenets informing the bank building at the design stage became obsolete shortly after it was built. As one detractor put it, 'the building was old-fashioned before it had had a chance to be modern,' and in the planned ring of tall, slender buildings surrounding the old inner city, the bank's head office remained a one-off for quite some time.

The building's qualities

Notwithstanding its generally frosty reception by the public at large, Duintjer's design boasts qualities that set it apart from other 'modern' buildings from the 1950s and 1960s. He belonged to a group of architects that mixed and matched traditional and modern styles, and his DNB building proves that even a large and complex design job on a straightforward piece of land and built from modest means can produce a solid, balanced outcome in architectural and urban planning terms. In terms of its height the building matches others on both sides, and its placement on 'pilotis' (supporting columns) and glass-covered outer walls was meant to open it to the outside world. The fact that the building did not easily blend into its environment is also down to the nature of a central bank: security requirements soon



Figure 5: DNB's building today with its two expansions (Satellite and 3rd floor on the wings) seen from southwest. Foto: Gert Eijkelboom.

led to steel bars between the pilotis of the low-rise building to keep out unwanted outsiders. Frederiksplein's green aspect serves as a transition between the small-scale, lively inner city with all its entertainments and this large-scale building on its edges. As a result, Frederiksplein has never become part of the urban cavalcade.

Duintjer's office tower is not visually aligned with the Weteringschans-Sarphatistraat axis, nor is it in sight from Utrechtsestraat. Its wider sides point westwards and eastwards, while one of the narrower sides overlooks Frederiksplein, and the building is not intrusive from any angle.

The glass facade alongside Frederiksplein is pleasingly proportioned, with its unpretentious layers of ground floor, overhanging two-floor cash-counting area and receding structure on top, giving it a rather reticent yet monumental quality. The first floor's significant jutting-out and its flat roof's equally overhanging aspect reinforce the low-rise building's horizontal nature, while the tower's vertical effect is emphasised by the optical correction of its slight tapering and the decreasing height of its window areas. These major contrasts in height and direction turn the low-rise and high-rise buildings into a simple, spatial interplay of pleasing proportions. Compared with the low-rise building, the tower is marked by austerity and simplicity, and it looks much less spectacular.

The high quality of the materials is clear from the aluminium instead of steel that Duintjer plumped for in the outside walls. He also left the formwork in the visible concrete, as Le Corbusier had done long before him. His subtle detailing and selective

use of materials all add up to a cultivated, restrained look and feel.

Satellite tower

In his designs Duintjer assumed that 'the building will be outdated and/or too small after sixty years' and that it would be replaced by a new one round about that time. That has not happened just yet. However, it has undergone various minor and major renovations and extensions since its completion in 1968. At that time, the building was able to accommodate 1,200 people, more than the workforce that actually moved in.

In the 1970s and 1980s, however, staff numbers grew rapidly and large central mainframe computers required more and more space. From the end of the 1970s, a pressing lack of space compelled DNB to rent or buy office properties in and around Frederiksplein, but the Board of Governors continued to prefer centralised accommodation over a more permanent spread of departments. Central accommodation in a single building was cheaper and benefited team spirit and collaboration, they felt, and they therefore decided to extensively expand the head office building in order to bring all staff back together under a single roof.

Inevitably, expansion would erode Duintjer's design, and architects Jelle Abma (1921-2009) and Marc a Campo (1954) faced quite a challenge in 1984. Abma was willing to fit in with the spatial plan of the existing building but refused to be led by its architecture; he insisted on making his addition contemporary and applying his own style. An additional floor on the low-rise wings was rejected for both aesthetic and construction reasons; he settled instead on a slender cylindrical tower adjacent to the existing high-rise building, as he felt this to be the most neutral option to offset the rectangular shape of Duintjer's tower, that would least compromise the beauty of the original building.

As in the 1960s, Amsterdam's residents were vociferous in their disapproval and opinions were sharply divided on whether or not the new addition would affect the beauty of the building. Ignoring its opponents, the city council approved the plan and the addition was built in the 1987-90 period. In fact, the construction of the satellite tower was to be the start of a major conversion and

modernisation of the interior of the existing building that ended with the completion of the new main entrance in 2004.

An extra floor after all

The 2004 tie-up with the insurance regulator, the Apeldoorn-based Pensions and Insurance Supervisory Board (PVK by its Dutch acronym) and the further expansion of DNB's responsibilities called for another major extension of the main building. A few years after the merger, the Governing Board decided to move all staff to the Amsterdam bank building and to dispose of the former PVK offices. Having considered and rejected a move to a different location in Amsterdam, the Board decided another extension of the building at Frederiksplein was their best option. In 2008, architect Marc a Campo and partners came up with a design for an extra floor on the east, south and west wings and for a major renovation of the north wing. The floor they put on top of Duintjer's had a heavier and more solid aspect, and was completed in 2010 after a series of much-needed construction adjustments. This would appear to have exhausted all option to expand the building.

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- 1 'Rapport aan de directie van De Nederlandsche Bank van de Adviescommissie voor de nieuwe Hoofdbank bevattend de beoordeling der plannen, die na de vervolgoedpracht van maart 1956 zijn ingezonden' ('Report to the Governing Board of De Nederlandsche Bank by the Advisory Committee for the new Headquarters, comprising of an assessment of plans submitted on the follow-up commission of March 1956'), May 1957.
- 2 HA 16116, 16117, 16118.
- 3 'Amsterdams Frederiksplein historische blunder. Dwingelandij vereeuwigd.' ('Historical blunder at Amsterdam's Frederiksplein. Bullying immortalised.') *De Tijd*, 20 December 1958.
- 4 'Het nieuwe tehuis van Lever Brothers. Wonder van doelmatige schoonheid.' ('The new home of Lever Brothers. A miracle of purposeful beauty.') *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 2 May 1952, HA 16106. Its inclusion in DNB's historical archives suggests the bank's interest in this building.

The Dutch architect Berlage and Nationale-Nederlanden

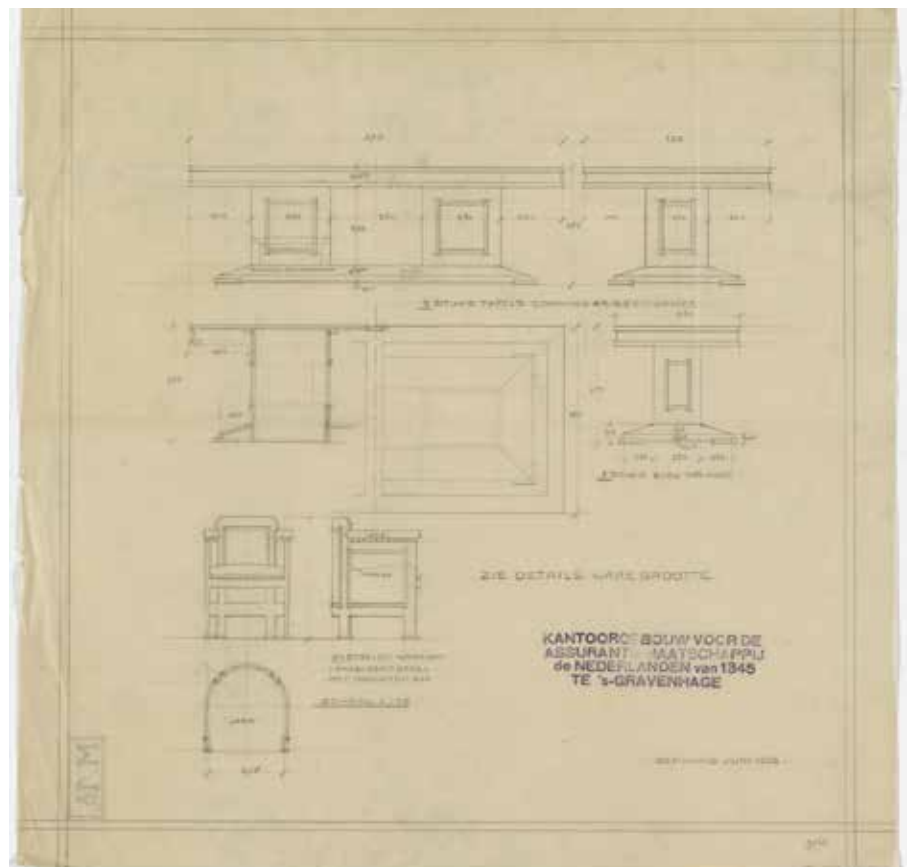
Ingrid Elferink

The famous Dutch architect Berlage and Nationale-Nederlanden (NN) were connected through the medium of progressive architecture. Berlage was considered NN's 'house architect'; over more than thirty years he built seven offices for the company and two houses for its director, Carel Henny.

Hendrik Petrus Berlage (1856-1934) is one of the most famous and influential Dutch architects, very well known for his Beurs van Berlage in Amsterdam, as well as for Amsterdam's urban development. Berlage introduced 'rationalism' into architecture in the beginning of the twentieth century. His last big project was the building of the Gemeentemuseum in The Hague; it opened a year after his death in 1935.

Nationale-Nederlanden (NN) was founded in 1845 as a fire-insurer, De Nederlanden van 1845 (De Nederlanden), in the east of the Netherlands, and very soon expanded its activities with agencies all over the world. In 1895, the director Carel Henny decided to move from Zutphen to The Hague. This seemed to be a better place for international contacts and much more sophisticated than the small town of Zutphen. Henny had connections in artistic and cultural spheres in The Hague. That's how he became connected with Hendrik Berlage, who was in those days not yet very famous as an architect. Henny gave Berlage the chance to design two offices for the company with complete creative freedom.

The first building was a branch office in Amsterdam that he finished in 1895, in the same style he built the head office in The Hague that opened in 1896. In 1911 he received the assignment for branch offices in Nijmegen and Rotterdam (both were destroyed in World War II); in 1914 in Batavia (now Djakarta) and in Utrecht in 1931. For Henny himself Berlage built two houses, one in 1898 and one in 1912, both in The Hague. His last big project for the company



Inventarisnummer 3343 Rechtsvoorganger De Nederlanden van 1845 Objectnaam Ontwerptekening 1926 Datum Algemeen: 56 x 56 cm Afmetingen. Draft for tables and chairs for the boardroom, designed by Berlage, 1926. © Historical Collection of NN Group.

was a new head office in 1927 in The Hague. We could say that Berlage was the 'house architect' of De Nederlanden.

The first buildings, the head office in The Hague and the branch office in Amsterdam, were built in a combination of romantic Italian medieval architecture and realism. The buildings were, in fact, a prelude to the famous Beurs van Berlage in Amsterdam that Berlage finished in 1903.

The two offices soon expanded as the company quickly grew. These refurbishments gave Berlage the opportunity to put his new insights in practice. More simplicity and more cubistic forms were used,

employing the same style that he used in 1911 for a branch office in Rotterdam. He used different kinds of building material - bricks and natural stones - not even as decoration, but also to strengthen the construction. For Berlage the art of architecture was a collaboration between architect, sculptor and painter. He made frequent use of colours, stained-glass windows and sculptures. For decorations he worked together with the sculptor Lambertus Zijl, who designed the symbolic figures related to the fire insurance and heraldic figures of the many countries where De Nederlanden had agencies.

As was common at the time, Berlage

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not only designed the buildings, but also the complete furniture and office materials, such as bookends, notebook holders and coat hangers. He even designed the layout of the policies for De Nederlanden.

In 1925, Berlage began the new head office for the company, at Groenhovenstraat in The Hague. This building was innovative in many ways. Berlage was not the first to use armoured concrete construction in a public building, but he was the first who didn't cover it with tiles or paint. He used the pure ferroconcrete in combination with red bricks and black glazed tiles that resulted in a very characteristic colour effect.

The assignment was to design an office where the administration of the insurer was directive to the architectural design. On the ground floor, Berlage built two large, open office spaces in the middle, surrounded with rooms for the superiors to have direct control over their employees via glazed walls. On the other side of the superiors' rooms, there were boardrooms for the directors to stay in contact with the superiors. This was the first office park in the Netherlands. It shows the influence of Frank Lloyd Wright's work on Berlage.

For Berlage it was clear that the design was subservient to the material and the use of the materials, not only for the exterior, but also inside the building. Materials were chosen for their durability, keeping the aesthetic effect in mind. This was, for critics in those days, somewhat 'cold, clinical (...) and not warm (...), a system without a heart, but a system that was brought into perfection'. The critics were very enthusiastic about the air conditioning. The office would be warm in winter and cool in summer, with constant humidity, all arranged from one point. The building was in those days the only place in the country where this technique was practiced.

The assignment also considered future needs. In his plans, Berlage kept expansion in mind and included designs for a second floor and expansion on the back side of the building. After the building suffered damages in World War II, both the second floor and the expansion were accomplished in 1954 by a new 'house architect', Willem Dudok.

Nationale-Nederlanden left the Groenhovenstraat in 1996 in exchange for the



Inventarisnummer 8505 Rechtsvoorganger De Nederlanden van 1845 Objectnaam Foto ca.1930 Datum Algemeen: 17 x 23cm Drager: 36 x 30cm Afmetingen Beschrijving Boardroom at Groenhovenstraat with furniture, designed by Berlage, 1930 Signatuur Foto: A. Frequin, Den Haag. © Historical Collection of NN Group.



Inventarisnummer 11783 Rechtsvoorganger De Nederlanden van 1845 Objectnaam Foto 1927-1943 Datum Foto: 23,9 x 20 cm Drager: 31,6 x 25,2 cm Afmetingen Beschrijving Headoffice at Groenhovenstraat in The Hague, 1927 Signatuur Foto: Reesink, Den Haag. © Historical Collection of NN Group.



Inventarisnummer 4575 Rechtsvoorganger De Nederlanden van 1845 Objectnaam Boekensteun 1926 Datum Algemeen: 20 x 37 x 14,8 cm Afmetingen Beschrijving Oak and coromandel bookend, designed by Berlage, 1926. © Historical Collection of NN Group.



Inventarisnummer HA-02156 Rechtsvoorganger De Nederlanden van 1845 Objectnaam Affiche 1911 Datum 58 x 43 cm Afmetingen Beschrijving Poster of the branche office at Muntplein in Amsterdam, 1911 Signatuur. © Historical Collection of NN Group.

current Head office. ●

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Property, finance and architecture. The Imperial Ottoman Bank's branch buildings

Lorans Tanatar Baruh

When 'upgraded' to a state bank in 1863, the assets of the Imperial Ottoman Bank (IOB) bank did not include any property from the former Ottoman Bank established in 1856. The IOB continued to use the premises of the former Ottoman Bank located in a 18th century building of the St. Pierre & St. Paul Monastery on the main commercial axis from Galata tower to the sea. The impressive headquarters of the bank would only be built thirty years later on the initiative of Sir Edgar Vincent, General Manager from 1889 to 1897. In a letter written to the London committee he complained about the building, stressing that it 'renders control impossible' and added that 'the smells are so bad that I wonder that half the staff are not down with typhoid fever'.¹ As a result the headquarters were commissioned to the Levantine Architect Alexandre Vallauri (1850-1921) and inaugurated in 1892. This story is a well known story and this paper does not intend to deal with the details of this building, which is now SALT Galata. Rather, it will deal with the history of branches, which are still used today by the Garanti Bank.

According to the statutes of the bank as well as the 1875 agreement with the government, branches would be opened in the provinces of the Empire; the cities of Izmir, Trabzon, Beirut and Salonica were explicitly mentioned but a second branch in Istanbul was not considered at that time. Several years later, in 1886, when the bank was to a large extent relieved of its duties as treasurer to the Public Debt Administration, it decided to explore the commercial market. However, the need to open a branch on the other side of the bridge became imperative. The branch should have started its activities in one of the rented offices as was the case in Galata or any other city



The Stamboul branch, 1930. SALT Research, OBA, Real Estates Albums.

of the Empire. Once the market was considered to be flourishing, the bank then decided to invest in property. Thus while the Stamboul branch would have the privilege of owning its premises, the Pera branch, opened in 1891, would first rent its offices in the Cité de Péra, at the corner of Theater Street² and then under the British School on the Grand rue de Péra.³

But the fact that another branch in Istanbul was not mentioned in the statutes caused problems when trying to transfer the property of Stamboul branch in the bank's name.⁴

Located on Yeni Cami Street in Eminönü, the premises of the Stamboul branch were also built by the architect of the bank, Alexandre Vallauri,⁵ on a plot of land which stood two houses to the side of Şeyh Mehmed Geylani's burial place and four shops to the side of the Yeni Cami courtyard. The land was purchased in 1894,⁶ and although the exact date of construction is unknown, it was most probably completed in 1895 or in the beginning of 1896, since neither the building nor the plots appear in the list of the bank's properties established in June 1894.⁷ These are mentioned in another inventory prepared two years later in June 1896.⁸ As with the head offices, this building, too, was soon found to be insufficient during the prosperous and booming business years, and an annex was built in 1906 by the architect engineer, M. Barouh⁹, on the Yeni Cami side of the branch, expanding it to 499,50 m².¹⁰

The new plots on Kırbaç Street between the Yeni Cami courtyard and the premises had a surface of 201 to 230 m². Their price was estimated at 10,000 liras.¹¹ They were bought and registered in 1905 in the name of Jules Deffès, general manager from 1904 to 1910. The value of the building was estimated at approximately 19,000 liras by Vallauri in 1898 before the addition of the annex, the construction

1 SALT Research, Ottoman Bank London, LA 24032, 'Plans and elevation of the Imperial Ottoman Bank's offices in Constantinople drawn by Alexandre Vallauri, with related original in-letters', Lettre de Sir Edgar Vincent to Mr. Lander, February 7, 1890.

2 The French engineer, R. Huber, who drew a map in 1887-1891 of the northern quarters of the Golden Horn to be presented to the Sultan in 1892 and rectified in 1895. Huber, Plan de Pera, Taxim, Pancaldi et Feriköy, plan dressé en 1887-91 et rectifié en grande partie en 1895, 49 / I-H.

3 In an album of the bank's branches dated 1930, the branch was still there. See SALT Research, Ottoman Bank Archive (OBA), IMHAL002, 'Banque Ottomane. Photographies des immeubles occupés par les agences de Turquie et de Grèce, 1930'. It was around 1950, when the bank took over the building named İkizler, formerly owned by Siniosoglou, and located on Saka Street. At that time it transferred its Pera branch to a property owned by the bank located the other side of the Istiklal Caddesi. See both locations on the plan by Suat Nirven, Beyoğlu: Meşrutiyet ve İstiklal Caddesi arası, 1/500, October 1950 and in that of Charles Goad, Plan d'assurance de Constantinople, v. 2, Pera-Galata, no: 37, 1905.

4 Ottoman State Archive (BOA), YA.RES 88-86, 'Bank-ı 'Osmani uhdesinde bulunan emlak hakkında yapılacak mu'ameleye dair', 1315.R.17 (September 15, 1897), doc. 2.

5 Mustafa Servet Akpolat, 'Fransız Kökenli Levanten Mimarı, Alexandre Vallauri', PhD diss., Hacettepe University, Ankara, September 1991, pp. 113-114.

6 Mentioned in BOA, YA.RES 88-86, op. cit.

7 SALT Research, OBA, XKHY003 00007, 'Banque Impériale Ottomane (Immeubles)', doc. 2E003-005.

8 SALT Research, OBA, XKHY003 00003, op. cit., doc. 5.

9 SALT Research, OBA, CDPV012, 'Procès-verbaux des séances du comité, 1904-1905', Meeting of May 10, 1905, p. 513.

10 From the file of Bahçekapı [former Yeni Cami] Branch kept at the department of Real Estate and Construction at the Garanti Bank.

11 SALT Research, OBA, CDPV012, op. cit., Meeting of November 3, 1904, p. 257.



Samsun branch, 1930. SALT Research, OBA, Real Estates Albums.

charges of which amounted to 8,600 liras, all expenses included.¹² This three storey building with its orientalist details could be classified as eclectic or in line with neo-classical Ottoman architectural style.¹³

The bank's head office and its Stamboul branch were located at the centre of the business and finance districts. This strategy was also followed for all branches of the bank opened outside the capital city of the Empire. As was the case for Stamboul, once the branch had reached a satisfactory amount of profit and it was found that the business would be prosperous, it could have the privilege of constructing its own building instead of renting offices. The decisions were submitted to London and Paris-based committees. Their approval of investment was sought and given only after the file was meticulously studied and discussed.

Following the Salonica branch, which was rebuilt after its bombing by Bulgarian revolutionaries in 1904 by the Italian architect Vitalliano Posetti (1838-1918),¹⁴ new investment decisions were taken for two other port cities: Samsun, in the Black Sea; and Beirut, in the Eastern Mediterranean¹⁵. On the eve of the 20th century, Samsun was a multiethnic city, partially due to the presence of the European Consulates and an important site for the business of tobacco, where the Regie

invested heavily. A letter sent on May 10, 1905 to the Paris committee revealed the need for greater space and the approval of constructing a new building was sought. This highlighted the fact that the lack of space resulted in customers' invasion of the employees' offices, which had several inconveniences for the way in which the bank ran its business. It was also mentioned that the bank tried unsuccessfully to find an investor who would undertake construction, which would meet the requirements of the bank, so that it could be rented for a long period. Thus the bank decided to look for a plot to construct its own building. But it was not an easy task because of high prices. Finally a plot was found at a moderate price in the business district that was owned by the Port Company. The architect and engineer M. Barouh estimated the cost of the building including the plot of 670 m² in the Kaleiçi quarter to be 4,000 liras.¹⁶ The approval of the two committees was wired in May 1925.¹⁷ It was decided that Barouh should undertake building both the Beirut and Samsun-based buildings. The final quote of the building in Samsun, which was constructed on a site of about 450 m² with a small garden of 220 m² at the back¹⁸, was 4,100 liras.¹⁹ The price included the plot. The contract of June 8 was signed by the Barouh & Amar architect office²⁰, located in Gumuchlu Han in Galata²¹. The contract mentioned that this price covered the construction of the building and of its surrounding walls as well as the repair of the garden wall adjacent to the quay. It comprised all travel expenses of the engineer Barouh as well as a 5% commission. The furnishing of the building, the heating installation, the water pipes and municipal taxes were not included in it. The work could start immediately and would last a year.²² It seems that the building was completed on

time since according to a letter of the Legal Department, the title of the new building was issued in July 1906 in the name of the general manager of the bank, Jules Deffès.²³

Another bank building was commissioned for the Eskişehir branch. Eskişehir is a city at the intersection of Istanbul, Ankara and Konya on the Baghdad Railway line, which reached the city in 1892. The increasing population and flourishing economy at the turn of the 20th century attracted the attention of the general management in Istanbul, which asked for authorisation to open a branch. The committees gave it on November 11, 1903.²⁴ The branch was opened in 1904 in a rented office located in the centre of the city. The contract was signed for five years with an annual fee of 48 liras and the flat above was rented for the director for 12 liras/year.²⁵ Soon, the office facilities came up short. Two suggestions of constructing a building for the branch on a long-term contract, one by Raif Bey at the market place²⁶, and the other by Hadji Edhem Bey,²⁷ didn't materialize. Thus the management decided to buy a plot and construct the building with its own means. The first proposal of the branch to buy a plot of 1,400 m² at 1,000 liras²⁸ wasn't followed up. Finally, the proposal to buy a plot of 1,200 pica or 690 m² in the business center of the city at 600 liras for its offices and storage area was approved.²⁹ One month later, an additional 52 liras was approved to increase the size of the plot to 1,312 pica³⁰ or 734 m².³¹

Two offers were received from the architects Moro and Carayannakis for the building and its depots. After consulting the architect adviser of the bank, Antoine Perpignani (1843-1910³²), the building was commissioned to Carayannakis. Carayannakis offered a better price at 3,431 liras as compared to that of Moro, which was 5,100 liras. As an illustration

12 SALT Research, OBA, CDPV013, 'Procès-verbaux des séances du comité, 1905-1907', Meeting of April 10, 1907, p. 623. The first estimation of the architect Vitalis was 6.000 liras. See SALT Research, OBA, CDPV012, op. cit. Meeting of November 3, 1904, p. 257.

13 Zeyneti Uluadam, 'Garanti Bankası Eminönü Şube Binası Restitüsyon Raporu' [Restitution Report of Garanti Bank Eminönü Branch Building], 2008, p. 1.

14 For the story of Salonica branch see <http://www.obarsiv.com/english/as-salonica-branch.html>

15 This article does not include the story of the building of the Beirut branch designed by the architect Barouh and the builder Derviche Haddad in 1906. The branch was transferred to the Banque de Syrie et du Liban after the World War I and destroyed during the civil war.

16 SALT Research, OBA, CDCPCA008, 'Comité de Paris. Correspondance active, 1904/05', Lettre no 1627, May 10, 1905, p. 617-18. In the weekly meeting of May 10, 1905, the price of the plot is mentioned as 1,500 liras. CDPV012, 'Procès-verbaux des séances du comité, 1904/05' Meeting of May 10, 1905, p. 511-512.

17 SALT Research, OBA, CDPV012, 'Procès-verbaux des séances du comité, 1904-1905', Meeting of May 19, 1905, p. 524.

18 'Harici Ekspertiz Raporu' [The External Expertise Report], November 11, 1996. From the file of Samsun Branch kept at the Department of Real Estates and Construction at the Garanti Bank.

19 SALT Research, OBA, CDPV012, op. cit., p. 545, June 3, 1905.

20 After the fire of 1890, Barouh & Amar reconstructed the Jake Abbott Mansion, where the Salonica branch of the Imperial Ottoman Bank was installed before the bombing of 1903. <http://www.radamanth.fotki.com/1/architects/1/barouh-amar/>

21 SALT Research, Yearbooks, Annuaire Oriental, 1909, p. 1049.

22 SALT Research, OBA, IMDIV01702891, 'Banque Imperiale Ottomane - Samsun'.

23 Ibid.

24 SALT Research, LA24035001, 'List of Branches of the Imperial Ottoman Bank', 1914, p. 5.

25 SALT Research, OBA, CDPV012, op. cit., 1904-1905, Meeting of June 6, 1904, p. 11.

26 SALT Research, OBA, CDPV014, 'Procès-verbaux des séances du comité, 1907-09', Meeting of August 6, 1907, p. 2.

27 SALT Research, OBA, CDPV014, op. cit., Meeting of August 14, 1907, p. 20.

28 SALT Research, OBA, CDPV013, op. cit., Meeting of March 28, 1907, p. 106.

29 SALT Research, OBA, CDPV014, op. cit., Meeting of February 5, 1908, pp. 291-292 and February 13, 1908, p. 302.

30 SALT Research, OBA, CDPV014, op. cit., Meeting of March 3, 1908, p. 336.

31 Deed title established instead of the old one written in Arabic script. From the file of Eskişehir Branch kept at the department of Real Estate and Construction at the Garanti Bank.

32 SALT Research, OBA, XKSE006 05444, 'Perpignani Antoine'

of his design plans he showed the building he had designed for the company of Deirmendjian & Sons. A one storey building was built on a construction site of 395 m² as well as the adjacent depots³³ were completed in December 1909.³⁴ However, it seems that the construction expenses exceeded the proposed amount as Carayannakis sought compensation for this loss three months into completion of the work. This compensation was refused on the basis that the bank needed at least six months to determine if the construction would serve the needs of the branch.³⁵

The following buildings were erected during the Republican era: the IOB, which survived this era by removing 'imperial' from its name and by adapting to the new regime, first constructed a new building in Mersin. The reason behind this is described in a lettre sent to the Paris committee. The director of the Mersin branch had expected a high increase in the annual fee of the rent. And yet the building was in a dilapidated condition and no longer fit the needs of the branch. Arguing that there was a lack of buildings suitable for the branch, the director suggested constructing a new one with depots for storing goods. The lettre added that this construction project was based on the growth prospects of city's economy.³⁶

Mersin was well connected to its hinterland through the Adana-Mersin railway line, first opened in 1886 and then transferred to the Baghdad Railway in 1908.³⁷ As Mersin emerged as a new and dynamic commercial centre, the number of trading companies increased at the turn of the 20th century. The IOB also took part in the financial transactions of Mersin through its new branch, opened in 1892. The flourishing economy also transformed the urban fabric of the city, which would continue during the early Republican period.³⁸

The Istanbul management was in favour



Eskişehir branch, 1930. SALT Research, OBA, Real Estates Albums.

of the proposal sent from Mersin and following a positive answer from the Paris committee, a detailed project was submitted for approval in November 10, 1925. The cost of the project would be 84,700 liras, including a two-storey building, which would be constructed on a site of 380 m².³⁹ The plot of 2,000 m² would be bought for 7,000 liras. It was noted that the price of 3,5 liras/m² was really low due to the owner's expectations that the construction of the bank's building would increase the value of the surrounding plots, which were owned by the same proprietor. Moreover, it was well located in the business centre on the road leading to the Municipality, not far from the sea and the train station as well as from the Government House.⁴⁰ One month later, another lettre sent to the committees, indicated that a plot of 600 m² was added to the main one at the same price in order to avoid any other construction in the near proximity of the branch. The details and plans of the construction were also added in the lettre. Architects in Paris analysed the project in detail. Their report was sent on March 12, 1926.⁴¹ However, these comments were not taken into consideration. The Istanbul management was in a hurry to finish the construction work in order to relocate the branch to its new location before the rent contract of the former one, which would expire on May 31, 1926. So, the project was approved and the construction work started when the report was received.⁴²

Very soon, the complaint of the directors about the size of their apartments was taken into consideration. Following the consultation

of the adviser architect Mongeri, the Istanbul management approved⁴³ revisions as well as additions suggested by the architect and constructor Orisdiz Zaglioli⁴⁴. An additional 10,312 liras would be paid for: the enlargement of the flat; the fenced enclosure with a wall and iron railings; the pavement; well drilling; pump installation; and the construction of the laundry room.⁴⁵ The Paris committee was very surprised that the concerns about the apartments surfaced only when the construction work was well advanced. Furthermore, it was expected that this enlargement, which would be taken from the balcony, would not affect the facade of the building nor the roof light illuminating the offices at the entrance.⁴⁶ The Istanbul management answered that in order to ensure better conditions such as spaciousness and staff well being in a hot city like Mersin and considering that additional expenses were not high, the modifications were approved. Briefly, the number of rooms would be increased from 4 to 5 for the director and from 3 to 4 for the adjoint director and their height was increased from 3,5 to 4 m. Moreover, a ventilation system, which harnessed the breeze from the sea during the day and from the mountains during the night, essential in a hot and humid city like Mersin, was installed.⁴⁷ As for the warning about the light and the facade, Istanbul management replied to the committee that Mongeri had assured management that they would not be badly affected.⁴⁸ However the construction work lasted longer than expected, and the bank had to renew its rent contract of the building that the branch was using until the end of the construction work.⁴⁹ It seems that the branch moved to its new building in the first half of 1927. In June, the baths were sent from Istanbul to be installed in the bathrooms of the directors⁵⁰ while in November, the branch submitted a proposal and its budget to Istanbul Management for transforming the uncultivated plot around the

33 The depots were sold on July 1, 1993 to a textile company, Sarar, which transformed it into a shop. See also the decision of the board of May 18, 1993. From the file of Eskişehir Branch kept at the department of Real Estate and Construction at the Garanti Bank.

34 SALT Research, CDPV015, 'Procès-verbaux des séances du comité, 1909/10', Meeting of December 6, 1909, p. 318.

35 SALT Research, CDPV015, 'Procès-verbaux des séances du comité, 1909/10', Meeting of March 18, 1910, p. 441.

36 SALT Research, CDCPCA029, 'Comité de Paris. Correspondance active, 1925', Lettre no: 738, July 8, 1925 and attached to it see the copy of the lettre sent by the Mersin branch on June 8, 1925.

37 Tülin Selvi Ünlü, Tolga Ünlü, From Railway Station to the Light-house, Mersin, Mersin Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 2009, p. 59.

38 Tolga Ünlü, Tülin Selvi Ünlü, Developing Commerce Changing City: Mersin 1850-1950, Mersin Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 2012, p. 125.

39 Detail from the file of Mersin Branch kept at the department of Real Estate and Construction at the Garanti Bank.

40 SALT Research, OBA, CDCPCA028, 'Comité de Paris. Correspondance active, 1925', Lettre no: 1147, November 10, 1925, p. 839.

41 SALT Research, OBA, CDCPCP031, 'Comité de Paris. Correspondance passive, 1926', Lettre no: 159, March 12, 1926.

42 SALT Research, OBA, CDCPCP032, 'Comité de Paris. Correspondance passive, 1926', Lettre no: 215, dated April 13, 1926, see also the answer dated April 26, 1926 attached to it.

43 SALT Research, OBA, CDCPCP032, op. cit., Lettre no: 308, dated May 26, 1926, see the notes dated May 12, 1926 attached to it.

44 John A. Rizzo, *Annuaire Oriental, Oriental Directory*, Constantinople, 1927, p. 368.

45 Ibid.

46 SALT Research, OBA, CDCPCP032, op. cit., Lettre no: 390 dated June 28, 1926.

47 SALT Research, OBA, CDCPCA030, 'Comité de Paris. Correspondance active, 1926', Lettre no: 565 dated June 16, 1926.

48 SALT Research, OBA, CDCPCP032, op. cit., Lettre dated July 24, 1926 and the Mongeri's Lettre of July 18, 1926 attached to the Lettre no: 390 ibid.

49 SALT Research, OBA, CDPV03700079A001, 'Procès-verbaux des séances du comité, 1926', Meeting of July 15, 1926, p. 654.

50 SALT Research, OBA, CPPV039, 'Procès-verbaux des séances du comité, 1927', Meeting of June 30, 1927, p. 396.



Mersin branch, 1930. SALT Research, OBA, Real Estates Albums.



Ankara branch. SALT Research, OBA, Real Estates Photos.

building into a garden, which was approved.⁵¹ A title deed of the branch issued in 1933 indicates that part of this garden was confiscated by the Municipality for the roads at the back and the left hand side of the building.⁵² According to the parcel plan, the size of the plot decreased from 2,600 to 2,562 m². The depots remained there until 1996.⁵³

Branches of Ankara and İzmir, which were of symbolic importance for the new regime, replaced previous buildings that had burnt down during the war years. Ankara was proclaimed the capital of the new regime and all resources were spent to transform this small town into a capital city. The new state building architecture started to shape the new Ankara. In 1926, the Ottoman Bank, one of the most prestigious financial institutions of the time, began construction at the corner of the avenue known as the Banks Avenue in the Ulus district. In a letter sent to the committee in Paris, its splendid location was communicated. It was located opposite to the National Defence Committee and the Administration of the Post Office and was next to the Agricultural Bank, which was close to state agencies and in a newly developing part of the city.⁵⁴ The plot of 1,000 m² was bought at 25.000 liras. The former plot of 720 m² on the Avenue of the Train Station was confiscated by the government for inclusion into the premises of the National Assembly. The price was set at 15 liras/m², which is a total price of 10,800 liras. Thus the bank would pay the difference of 14,200 liras to the state for the new plot.⁵⁵

From the minutes of the board in Istanbul, it is clear that much care was given to the construction of the new building. The Paris

Committee was reluctant to work with a German company and introduced French counterparts like la Régie Générale de Chemins de Fer & Travaux Publics.⁵⁶ However Giulio Mongeri (1873-1953), the Levantine adviser architect of the bank since 1911⁵⁷, insisted on collaborating with Philipp Holzmann from Frankfurt acting through Nazım Bey. Nazım Bey had undertaken several projects in the city including the Italian Embassy in Ankara⁵⁸. As Mongeri was not living in Ankara, he wanted to entrust the construction to a company with skilled labor, keeping the necessary material stocks.⁵⁹ Finally, the Paris committee consented in working with this company on the condition that the intermediary Nazım Bey mediated between the parties.⁶⁰

The cost of the construction was estimated at 200,000 - 220,000 liras⁶¹ and to this would be added the treasury, electricity and the heating system installations and counters.⁶² The additional cost was forecast at 29,250 liras by Mongeri. This took into consideration that the price of the vault was calculated at the rate of a German company C. Ade, located in Berlin, and which was cheaper than British or French vaults sold by Chatwood, Milners and Fichet. The first floor of this three storey building was conceived for banking activities and particular attention was paid to the offices of the directors who would be in touch with ministers, diplomatic figures or other state officers. The second floor was dedicated to the apartment of the director, which included an office, two rooms, a servant room, a restroom, a saloon

and a dining room for the receptions.⁶³ The last floor was designed as a semi-open terrace.⁶⁴ Although it was not mentioned explicitly, the branch most probably moved to its new premises at the beginning of 1928.

The new branch building in İzmir was also constructed in the same period. The former building was located on the quay. It had burnt down on September 15, 1922 during a fire which destroyed a space of about 3 million square meters in the city. Following the proclamation of the Republic, the municipality signed a contract with René and Raymond Danger brothers for an urban plan, which was approved in July 1925⁶⁵ and immediately implemented.⁶⁶ In the same year, a law was approved that designated the destroyed area as wasteland, giving the municipality the right to confiscate the land.⁶⁷

The bank first attempted to buy the building of National Bank of Greece in İzmir but the exchange could not be concluded since the building belonged to the properties included in an agreement concerning the exchange of populations and thus became the property of the municipality.⁶⁸ A second attempt to buy a plot to construct the building from Muammer Uşakizade⁶⁹ also failed as the municipality also appropriated this plot.⁷⁰ A few months later, the Boulevard Company offered the bank a plot of 832.14 m² at 43.5 lira/m². The bank's management negotiated the price of 48,000 liras and asked the approval of the Paris committee.⁷¹ The plot, which was at the corner of the two new avenues, namely Gazi Paşa and Fevzi Paşa, was well situated and close to the customs, municipality and other government administration buildings. Although it was felt that the plot was inferior to the one conceived as 1,000 or 1,200 m², it would be sufficient for the services of the bank.⁷²

63 SALT Research, OBA, CDCPCA029A, op. cit., Lettre no 519 of June 3, 1926, p. 948.

64 Mehmet Sarıoğlu, 'Bankalar Caddesinin Öyküsü', *Uzman Gözüyle Bankacılık*, no: 27, p. 54.

65 Candaş Bilgel, 'Bir Şehir Küllerinden Yeniden Doğuyor: Cumhuriyet Smyrna'sının Kuruluşu', *İzmir 1830-1930 unutulmuş bir kent mi? Bir Osmanlı limanından hatıralar*, ed. by Marie-Carmen Smyrnelis, İstanbul: İletişim, 2009, p. 243-245.

66 Uğur Tanyeli, 'Modern İzmir's Architectural Venture', *Three Ages of İzmir: Palimpsest of Cultures*, İstanbul: YKY, 2003, p. 334.

67 SALT Research, OBA, CDPV034, 'Procès-verbaux des séances du comité, 1925', Meeting of May 30, 1925, p. 497.

68 SALT Research, OBA, CDPV034, op. cit., Meeting of May 5, 1925, p. 568.

69 Member of a prominent family in İzmir, who worked for a while at the bank.

70 SALT Research, OBA, CDPV034, op. cit., Meeting of June 27, 1925, pp. 596-597.

71 SALT Research, OBA, CDCPCA029; Comité de Paris. Correspondance active, 1925/26; Lettre no: 1303, December 24, 1925, p. 83-84.

72 SALT Research, OBA, CDCPCA028; Comité de Paris. Correspondance active, 1925; Lettre no: 916, September 10, 1925, p. 477.

51 SALT Research, OBA, CDPV039, op. cit., Meeting of November 3, 1927, p. 920.

52 From the file of Mersin Branch kept at the department of Real Estate and Construction at the Garanti Bank.

53 Ibid.

54 SALT Research, OBA, CDCPCA029A, 'Comité de Paris. Correspondance active, 1926', Lettre no: 20, Lettre of January 8, 1926.

55 SALT Research, OBA, CDPV036, 'Procès-verbaux des séances du comité, 1926', Meeting of January 21, 1926, pp. 67-68.

56 SALT Research, OBA, CDCPCP031, 'Comité de Paris. Correspondance passive, 1926', Lettre no: 142, March 5, 1926.

57 Uğur Tanyeli, *Mimarlığın Aktörleri: Türkiye 1900-2000*, İstanbul: Garanti Galerisi, 2007, p. 374.

58 SALT Research, OBA, CDCPCA029A, op. cit., Lettre no: 156, February 13, 1926.

59 SALT Research, OBA, CDCPCA029A, op. cit., Lettre no: 263, March 15, 1926.

60 SALT Research, OBA, CDCPCP031, op. cit., Lettre no: 136, March 2, 1926.

61 SALT Research, OBA, CDCPCP032, op. cit., 'Comité de Paris. Correspondance passive, ???', June 18, 1926.

62 SALT Research, OBA, CDCPCA029A, op. cit., Lettre no 519 of June 3, 1926, p. 949.

The Paris committee felt that the location of the new plot was not as good as the earlier one and observed that the best location on the quays were sold to competitors of the bank, namely the Banco di Roma, İş Bankası, Deutsche Bank, la Banque française des Pays d'Orient et la Banque de Salonique as well as to different public and private agencies.⁷³ Thus the bank's management was criticised as slow in finding a plot to construct the building. However, the approval was given and the new plot was bought at 40,000 liras.

As was the case in Ankara, this building was commissioned to Mongeri and constructed by the company Philipp Holzmann. The plans of the building were submitted to the Paris committee on March 31, 1926⁷⁴ and carefully revised by their architects Naville & Chauquet, who found the projects worthy of execution. However, they added that a simpler plan would present a more serious style, which would better fit the image of the bank. Moreover the lighting of the hall of the counters was not good enough and the connections were considered complicated.⁷⁵ The Paris committee also commented that they would not want to have a fancy building like the ones done for exhibitions.⁷⁶ Mongeri, as the architect of several buildings commissioned by the government or its agencies, explained to the management that facades were important in Turkey and the nationalist regime was looking to develop a national architecture.⁷⁷ The general director, Pougnaodresse, wrote to the committee that the local taste should be followed but the committees as well as his own ideas should also be heeded. The decoration of the facades should be simplified as much as possible.⁷⁸ The Paris committee agreed to this but regretted that the architects of both parties could not work together because of the lack of time.⁷⁹

Regarding the concerns of the Paris committee with respect to the construction company, the bank wrote that the details of the offer of the construction work, amounting to

260,000 liras and presented by Mehmed Galib and İbrahim Galib acting as the agents of the Société Internationale de Génie Civil or the former company Simon Carvès, were incomplete. Moreover, the personal experience of Mongeri with this company in the construction of the Agricultural Bank in Ankara was not satisfactory. He reported that their work was not well organized, the company was using unskilled labor and their implementation was very bad. Even though their offer was higher, in numbers amounting to 287,000 liras,⁸⁰ these were the reasons why the management in Istanbul decided to work with Holzmann as had been the case in Ankara. Paris approved it by a telegram sent on June 30, 1926.⁸¹ The construction work included the modifications required on February, 1927⁸². It lasted longer than the expected time of 275 working days⁸³ and the bank had to extend the contract for three months to the end of 1927.⁸⁴ Finally, the branch moved to its new premises, classified as one of the examples of the first national architectural movement⁸⁵ in İzmir, on February 11, 1928.

The construction stories of these buildings helps to understand how decisions were taken; what the power relations between local authorities, committees in Paris and London and the Istanbul management were; to follow the processes behind these decisions and their implementation; to grasp the differences between the Ottoman and Republican periods; and to trace the bank's relationship with the architects.



İzmir branch, ca 1928. SALT Research, OBA, Real Estates Photos.

The IOB used a number of adviser architects including Alexandre Vallauri, Antoine Perpignani and Giulio Mongeri. In a few cases, as was the case with branches in Eskişehir and Mersin, buildings were commissioned to a third party or a local architect and constructor under the supervision of the adviser architect. In the Republican period, the Paris committee was closely involved in the details of these plans. The idea was that these buildings were to be the face of the bank. Moreover, it was a question of security, as well as comfort of the staff and customers. Thus they insisted on having their say and established a close collaboration of architects in Paris with the adviser architect in Istanbul.⁸⁶ However, although they tried hard, the committees abroad were not successful in implementing their suggestions with regard to the architectural style, nor the construction processes of those buildings. The Paris committee had no other choice than to accept local decisions. Thus, although the bank remained a foreign investment until 1996, it had to adapt to the realities of the country and follow the local trends of the time, as was the case for the Mersin, Ankara and İzmir branches.

The branches described here were important investments of the time. They were represented in the main images of the bank and included on the maps of the towns. As the cities were expanding and their population increasing, new branches were opened. As a consequence those branches lost their previous uniqueness in the business. On the other hand, after the sale of the bank to the Doğu Group in 1996, their interior was modified as the flats of the directors were transformed into offices. Nonetheless, these historical buildings remain important examples of urban civil architecture and today are considered a part of the historical legacy of those sites. ●

73 SALT Research, OBA, CDCPCP031, 'Comité de Paris. Correspondance passive, 1926', Lettre no: 13, January 8, 1926.

74 SALT Research, OBA, CDCPCA029A, 'Comité de Paris. Correspondance active, 1925/26', Lettre no: 316, March 31, 1926, p. 619.

75 SALT Research, OBA, CDCPCP032, 'Comité de Paris. Correspondance passive, 1926', Report of April 21, 1926 and attached to the lettre dated April 26, 1926.

76 SALT Research, OBA, CDCPCP032, op. cit., lettre dated April 26, 1926.

77 SALT Research, OBA, CDCPCA029A, op. cit., Lettre no: 520, sent on June 3, 1926, p. 950.

78 Ibid, p. 951.

79 SALT Research, OBA, CDCPCP032, op. cit., Lettre dated June 8, 1926.

80 SALT Research, OBA, CDCPCA031A, 'Comité de Paris. Correspondance active, 1926/27', Lettre no: 147, dated February 12, 1927, p. 565. The offer didn't include the installation of the electricity, the heating, the vaults and the counters, which were estimated by Mongeri to cost 37,500 liras. SALT Research, OBA, CDCPCA030, op. cit., Lettre no: 629, June 30, 1925.

81 SALT Research, OBA, CDCPCP033, 'Comité de Paris. Correspondance passive, 1926', Lettre dated July 10, 1926. CDCPCA030, op. cit., Lettre no: 703, July 19, 1926, p. 275-276.

82 The branch asked for a new vault to keep the books inside and a lift for all floors, a storage room for opium and the widening of the passage leading to it, the relocation of the restrooms from the basement to the first floor. SALT Research, OBA, CDPV038, 'Procès-verbaux des séances du comité, 1927', Meeting of February 9, 1927, no: 27, p.3. SALT Research, OBA, CDCPCA031A, op. cit., Lettre no: 147, February 12, 1927, pp. 564-565. By way of explanation, advances on commodities were a speciality of Anatolian branches, where agricultural production constituted the major backing of such transactions and opium was not considered illegal until 1930s. Edhem Eldem, A History of the Ottoman Bank, Istanbul, Ottoman Bank, 1999., p. 279.

83 SALT Research, OBA, CDCPCA030, op. cit., Lettre no: 629, June 30, 1925.

84 SALT Research, OBA, CDPV039, 'Procès-verbaux des séances du comité, 1927', Meeting of December 6, 1927, p. 999.

85 İnci Aslanoğlu, Erken cumhuriyet dönemi mimarlığı 1923-1938, 3rd edition, Istanbul: Bilge Kültür Sanat, 2010, pp. 245-246.

86 OBA, CDCPCP032, op. cit., Lettre no: 215, April 13, 1926.

İşbank's architectural approach. Three headquarters buildings

In 1922, at the end of a decade of war Turkey economically had lost nearly everything. Capital was highly limited, and the population had decreased. Therefore, before the announcement of the republic, the leaders of modern Turkey organized an economy congress in İzmir (Smyrna) in 1923. Mustafa Kemal, the founder of Turkish Republic, stated there: 'No military victory, unless crowned with economic triumph, can be expected to last.'

The general aim of the congress was to define economic principles and possible developmental paths of the new Turkish state. At the congress merchants and industrialists who were struggling to find financing declared their demand for a 'main commercial bank.' In 1924 İşbank was founded to meet their demand; to finance all corners of the country; to provide security for investors; and to convert the nation's savings into domestic investments. In keeping with the country's economic policies, the good of the nation was always paramount.

The bank was founded as a private bank. However, it was founded on Mustafa Kemal's initiative. He was the largest individual shareholder and notables of big cities also invested in İşbank. Founded in the poor and arid Ankara of the day, with a strength derived from the determination of a nation that had been fighting for ten years, the bank was a clear indication of the resolution of the Republican administration in matters related to economic development.

While people's first demand was to be financed, İşbank gave priority to collecting savings. However, a mere 96 savers had opened accounts in the bank's first four months in 1924. It was a major challenge to attract the savings of the rural population into bank safes. There was no established trust in the banking system. İşbank supported the savings culture on all fronts. It started to distribute coin banks in 1928, encouraged families to own one, and



Headquarters in Ulus, Ankara, 1929.

executed wide-ranging advertising campaigns. Also the Bank contributed to the Saving Weeks, which had been celebrated each year since 1929 in Turkey. And the Bank especially supported school activities in that week. Therefore, Turkey witnessed the birth of a savings culture as well as that of branch banking in the country.

In becoming a reliable corporate entity, the bank endeavored to implement certain principles in its own working practice. From the beginning a 'banking ethic' was being cultivated. A number of instructions were issued in order to ensure the inculcation of respect for the law and the customer. İşbank may well have been founded at a time when no banking code of practice was in place, but it did its best to formulate its own. And this served its trustworthiness too.

Another factor which makes a bank sound and credible is its buildings. İşbank gave importance to its building of branches in order to create a credible financial institution. Both the locations in the towns and the interior and exterior architectural

designs served İşbank's trustworthiness. The doors of the main safe and safe-deposit box section were the most promotional elements that showed how sound the Bank was. Because fires were very common among old wooden, traditional Turkish houses, the robustness of buildings was very crucial.

The architecture was also significant. In 1930, in a letter of the chief executive officer, Celal Bayar listed noteworthy points of new branch buildings, if the buildings were to be built by the Bank. He said:

'We prefer Turkish architects; we believe there are component architects in the country. ...From now on İşbank buildings have a style and new buildings should copy that. Thus, it will be unnecessary to read the signboard on the building in order to understand that the building is a branch of İşbank. The plans of new branches should be laid out.'

While he said 'from now on' he implied three buildings: Ankara, Edremit, and İzmir branches. These three new buildings were built in 1929 and 1930. The Bank's directors



The skylight decorated with stained glass illustrating Hermes the protector and patron of trade, 1930s.



The ground floor of the headquarters in Ulus, Ankara.



A room of directors; Headquarters in Ulus, Ankara.

defined each detail, from their locations to their furnishing. They had special place not only in İşbank's history, but also in Turkish architectural history. The Ankara branch was the first built and it served 47 years as the headquarters of the Bank.

Announced as the capital city of modern Turkey in 1923, Ankara was reconstructed in the 1920s. In 1928, a city planning competition was held and the winner was German architect Hermann Jansen. His plan would shape the city for the next fifty years. In particular, it defined Ulus Square as the center of the city. Hosting the famous Atatürk statue, Ulus square connected the street leading to the railway station and the road of Çankaya, where Mustafa Kemal lived.

Ankara also hosted İşbank headquarters since its foundation in 1924. The first buildings of the Bank were hired. In 1926, a parcel of land in the centre of Ulus Square was bought to construct a prospective headquarters building. The land was located behind the building of Ministry of Finance and opposite to Atatürk's statue.

Giulio Mongeri was selected as the architect of the building in 1927. He came from an Italian Levantine family and was a prominent architect both in the last years of the Ottoman Empire and early modern Turkey. He was one of the last members of

the 'First National Architecture Movement' which was dominant between 1908 and 1930. Among his buildings were the Ottoman Bank, Ziraat Bank, Monopolies Chief Directorate in Ankara and Assicurazioni Generali Han, Karaköy Palace, Maçka Palace, and Saint Antoine Church in İstanbul. He was a teacher at the Academy of Fine Arts and one of his students was Sedat Hakkı Eldem, one of the most prominent architects of republican architecture.

The İşbank headquarters building in Ulus would become Mongeri's most famous work. He had an eclectic architecture style. The building had a triangular layout with two oval rooms in the centre. The oval skylight was decorated with stained glass produced by Corvaya-Bazzi&C in Milan and it illuminated the upstairs corridors and the spacious hall in the ground floor. The picture on the skylight belonged to Hermes, the protector and patron of invention and trade in Greek mythology. The form of the windows was inspired by Baroque buildings but he used Seljuk and Ottoman styles in the façades. Thematically, a triple façade composition was used and the building was divided into three parts: a ground floor, three floors in the middle, and the top floor. Multiple windowed and luminous surfaces, as well as the Ottoman ogee arches were the parts of the building where Mongeri showed his skills. There were Seljuk geometric figures in the safety fences of the first floor. The name of the Bank written on the pediment and the arbour above the entrance represented the Art Nouveau style of the beginning of the 1900s.

Although 200.000 Turkish Liras were planned for the construction in the beginning, a contract for 477.740 was

awarded. However, because of some inevitable expenses such as concrete piling for healthier ground, an elevator, a lightening conductor, fire extinguishers, some luxury expenditures such as marble columns and floors, a winter garden, a bathroom, a pedestal, and extravagant furniture, the total cost approached four times as much as the initial amount. The final total was 736.118 Liras. The manufacturer of the furniture was Selahattin Refik, who owned the most celebrated furniture shop in the early Republic.

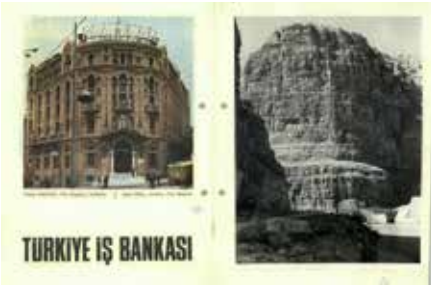
The building was completed in June 1929. It was announced that İşbank would celebrate its fifth anniversary in its new building. After the gorgeous building was opened the leading newspapers and journals such as *Hakimiyet-i Milliye* and *Servet-i Fünun* narrated the event under special topics with detailed information and lots of photographs. In September 1929 Mustafa Kemal Atatürk visited the headquarters and again the press was full of tribute to the architecture of the building.

One year thereafter Giulio Mongeri built another branch of İşbank in Edremit, a small Aegean town near İzmir. This building was much smaller than the Ulus building, but had similar characteristics. Although its architect was not Mongeri, the İzmir branch was similar too. All these three buildings were the most significant structures in their towns and located in the centre squares. Thus, just as Celal Bayar had indicated in 1930, people easily noticed them as branches of İşbank.

Over the years this building became a symbol of İşbank. Since it represents 'trust' with its architecture, it was used in the advertisements, in the press, and in the



Headquarters in Kavaklıdere, Ankara, 1970s.



Headquarters in Levent, İstanbul, 2000s.

The crag called 'İşbank Mountain' in Uludere-Hakkari, Southeastern Anatolia.

promotional materials. People compare it to a crag in Southeastern Anatolia and refer to that crag as 'İşbank Mountain.' By the 1960s, the Bank had outgrown the Ulus headquarters building. Some units were moved to rented or purchased property.

In 1967, it was decided that the headquarters be moved to another address, Kavaklıdere. The Construction and Property

Division of the Bank picked the Ayhan Böke and Yılmaz Sargin project from a field of seven submissions. The construction contract was awarded to the Esat Ayduk Koray Company for the three-block complex, whose B block rose to 29 stories and a height of 91 metres. Construction took four and a half years and the building was inaugurated at the end of 1976. This monumental edifice, designed by İşbank architects, showed the progress made by modern

Turkish architecture; at the time, it was the tallest 'skyscraper' in Turkey. The building is still one of the most aesthetic buildings of Ankara.

On the eve of the new millennium İşbank moved its headquarters to Levent, İstanbul. The need to be closer to the markets had been felt for decades. In the middle of 1990s an international contest was held and Swanke Hayden Connell International and Doğan Tekeli-Sami Sisa Architecture prepared the architectural design. The constructors represented Turkish-American co-operation; Tepe İnşaat and Turner/Steiner International SA started to construct in 1995 and it took five years to be completed. It was again a three-block complex. Block 1 contains 52 floors and rises 181.20 meters and two other blocks rise 117.1 meters. It remained the tallest building of

Turkey until 2011. The buildings are 'intelligent'; the buildings' heating, ventilation, air conditioning, lighting and other systems are controlled by a centre automatically. Today more than 4500 people work at the complex.

Today the Ulus building still hosts the Ankara branch; the Kavaklıdere building is used by the Banking Regulation and Supervision Agency of Turkey. All these years later İşbank continues to follow its first CEO's orders, endeavouring to continue a tradition and to maintain the importance and influence of the buildings. ●

Underneath the Bank of England

Margherita Orlando and Rachael Muir

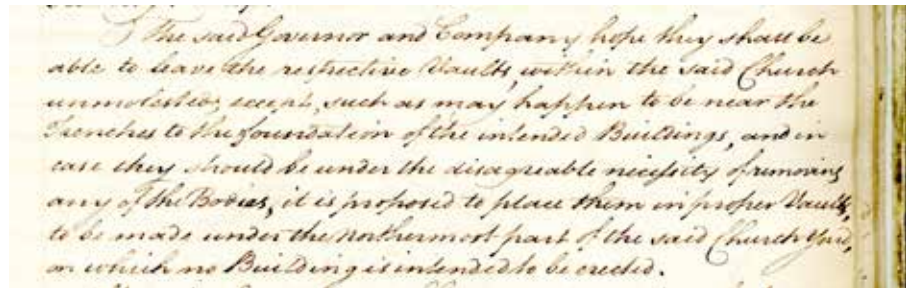
This article discusses aspects of the ‘hidden’ history of the site of the Bank of England, and what lies beneath the well-known building in the heart of the City.

Early development of the Bank and the Church of St Christopher-Le-Stocks

The public is used to the imposing presence of the Bank of England on Threadneedle Street, but few know that the Bank has not always occupied its current grounds, and that it has evolved from much smaller premises.

For the first 40 years of its life the Bank resided in rented accommodation; first in the Mercer’s Hall on Cheapside and subsequently in the Grocers’ Hall in Poultry. The Bank moved to its own premises on Threadneedle Street in 1734, but had begun acquiring properties on the same street from 1724. The initial plot of land purchased was the house of the first Bank Governor, Sir John Houblon, which was pulled down to erect new premises. The Bank continued to acquire additional properties in the areas of Threadneedle Street, Lothbury, Bartholomew Lane and Princes Street to continue to enlarge its building by progressively adding new sections. The Bank’s Archive holds several examples of title deeds that document the expansion of the building in the 18th century, including the purchase of a few taverns, coffee houses and a textile shop.

An interesting development of the Threadneedle Street site came with the purchase of the church of St Christopher-Le-Stocks, and its accompanying churchyard and burial ground in 1781. The Church was based west of the Bank building on Threadneedle Street. During the Gordon Riots of 1780 it was feared that the ‘very easy access to the internal parts’ of the church, ‘and from thence to the Bank’¹ may endanger the public and the Bank itself. Military protection was provided during the riots, but the proximity of the church to the Bank was perceived as a continued threat in



Extract from the Committee for Building minutes discussing the burial ground (Bank of England Archive, Ref. M5/748) <http://www.bankofengland.co.uk/archive/Pages/digitalcontent/archivedocs/archive.aspx>.

case riots were to occur again. A petition was put forward for the purchase of the church by the Bank, with a view to expanding the Bank’s premises and to remove the potential danger.

A note written to the Bank’s lawyers by an ecclesiastical expert discusses the restrictions associated with building over a consecrated ground: ‘Although land consecrated for use as a Church or burial ground of the Church of England is by virtue of the consecration rendered incapable of use for secular purposes [...], this disability can be removed by an Act of Parliament.’² This restriction made it necessary for the Bank to request an Act in order to be able to proceed with the purchase of the Church and building work.

The Act was passed in 1780, and vested the church of St Christopher-Le-Stocks to the Governor and Company of the Bank of England³. This included the ‘Church yard, and the site and building of the vestry room, water closet, and north tower [...]’⁴. Following the Act, the church was purchased and its site was used to erect a West Wing for the Bank, designed by Robert Taylor, who was the Bank’s architect between 1764–1788.

The only part of the church that was however left intact, was the yard with the burial ground. The 1781 Building minutes record that the Bank’s Governors hoped to ‘leave the respective vaults [where the burial ground

was based] within the said church unmolested’, unless these happened to be located near the foundations of the planned new building. In the event that any of the burials had to be removed, it was proposed to place them ‘in proper vaults’, located in the church yard, ‘on which no building is intended to be erected’⁵.

As it happened, the yard and cemetery were not built over and remained as the Bank garden or ‘Garden Court’ in the west side of the Building until 1932.

The 1920s and 1930s marked a significant turning point in the architectural history of the Bank. As a consequence of the rapidly increasing volume of work and responsibilities, the Bank was forced to meet the needs of its growing workforce. Sir Herbert Baker was appointed architect in 1925 to oversee the rebuilding project which led to the demolition of much of Sir John Soane’s renowned Bank of England. Where Soane’s Bank had been no more than three storeys in height, Baker’s Bank included seven storeys above ground and a further three below. His plans centred around rebuilding the Bank on the same 3 ½ acre site at Threadneedle Street of which the Soane Bank had occupied. However, not all of Soane’s building was lost as it was agreed to preserve the exterior façade, a suggestion voiced as part of an appeal by The Soane Museum in 1923.⁶ Indeed, Soane’s imposing outer wall

1 Bank of England Archive, Ref. M5/748.
<http://www.bankofengland.co.uk/archive/Pages/digitalcontent/archivedocs/archive.aspx>.

2 Bank of England Archive, Ref. G15/321.
3 Bank of England Archive, Ref. 13A84/2/8.
4 Bank of England Archive, Ref. M5/748.

5 Bank of England Archive, Ref. M5/748.
6 Bank of England Archive, Ref. 1A86/5.



Old Garden Court in 1887. Photograph collection, Bank of England Archive Ref. HOG28.

can still be seen today.

With the Bank intending to erect a completely fresh structure, legal advice was sought as to whether the 1781 Act in fact gave the Bank full power to exhume the bodies and remove the burial ground. On 23 November 1922, the Committee on the Rebuilding of the Bank reported to the Court of Directors that 'the new building will cover the present garden, which forms part of the old Churchyard of St Christopher-le-Stocks; and [...] it is possible that in certain circumstances the right of the Bank to build on the Old Churchyard may be contested, and the Committee therefore recommend that the Bank should ask Parliament to pass an Act in order that any uncertainty may be removed.'⁷ A new Act of Parliament was therefore required by the Bank to remove the burials, and this was passed as the Bank of England Act 1923. It authorised the Governor and Company of the Bank to remove any bodies found in the burial ground during the re-building.

This explains why, when comparing two aerial views of the Bank, one can notice that from the 1920s the garden moved from the west side of the building to the middle, where it is still located today.

Roman finds

The rebuilding period of the early twentieth century also brought to light the historic significance of the Bank's site in the heart of the city. The area that is now known as City of London was under Roman rule for a fifth of its history⁸, and this is reflected in the wealth of Roman finds discovered under the 'old' Bank during the rebuilding phase.

When the development work began in 1926, it fell to the Society of Antiquaries to form a rota for site watching over the archaeology



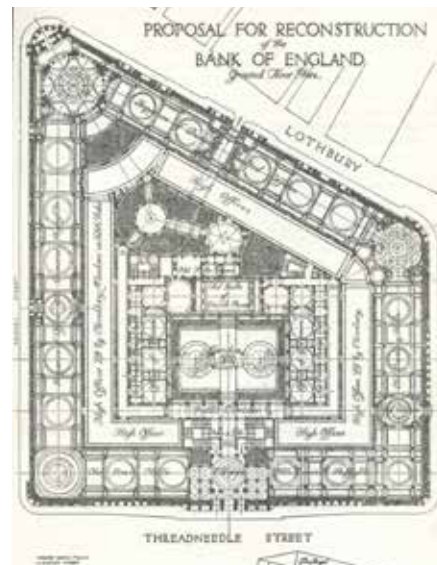
Ground plan of the Bank before the rebuilding in the 1920s. The churchyard of St Christopher Le Stocks can be seen on the left hand side, named as 'garden court'. Bank of England Archive, Ref. E8/7.

plots.⁹ It had long been known by the Society that the site of the Bank held Roman remains, as can be seen from their minutes in 1732:

'Mr Sam Gale acquainted the Society, yt in digging up some old foundations near ye new Fabric erected Anno 1732 for ye Bank of England Mr Sampson ye architect discovered a large old wall, eight foot under ye surface of ye ground, consisting of chalk stone and rubble, next to Threadneedle Street in which was an arch of stone and a busto of a man placed in it standing upon ye plinth, which he carefully covered up again: there was no inscription but he believed it to be Roman'.¹⁰

The discovery of intact mosaic pavements offered an insight into the wealthy society that once lived where the Bank now stands. One pavement had already been uncovered in 1805, but two further tessellated pavements were found during the excavations of the 1920s.¹¹ The beautifully colourful and intricately designed mosaics demonstrated that the site had been a 'residential district of a high order', whilst also suggesting that the surrounding shelters would have been substantial in their construction.¹²

As a reflection of their importance, both mosaic pavements were removed and then



Ground plan of proposal for the reconstruction of the Bank. Showing the new garden located in the centre of the building. Bank of England Archive, Ref. E8/7.

sensitively restored following the excavation work. One mosaic was then integrated and can be seen as part of Baker's new Bank building in the 1930s, and the other becoming part of the Bank of England Museum's collection.

Alongside the mosaics, a number of artefacts associated with Roman London were unearthed during the excavations of the Bank of England site in the early twentieth century. Of particular note was the discovery of a type of red-glazed pottery, also known as 'Samian' ware or Terra Sigillata.¹³ Such pottery was not produced in the British Isles; its manufacture can in fact be traced to the Auvergne district in France.¹⁴ And like the mosaic pavements, they offer some insight into the families that used to occupy the site in Roman times.

'None of the bowls found on the Bank site departs in the slightest degree from the chaste in its decoration – evidence of the respectability of the families occupying the site in its early days.'¹⁵

Further artefacts also included Roman water pipes which illustrate the sophistication of the societal infrastructure established in Roman Britain. Formed from oak, the pipes were square in shape and included bores in the centre, and iron collars at meeting points.¹⁶ Indeed, these appear to be one of a kind with The Old Lady magazine noting in 1930 that

⁷ Bank of England Archive, Ref. G15/321.

⁸ (<https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/things-to-do/visit-the-city/attractions/guildhall-galleries/Pages/londons-roman-amphitheatre.aspx>).

⁹ Wilmott, T., Excavations in the Middle Walbrook Valley, London and Middlesex Archaeological Society Special Paper 13 (1991), p. 51.

¹⁰ Bank of England Archive, Ref. E8/64.

¹¹ Bank of England Archive, Ref. E8/64.

¹² Bank of England Archive, Ref. E8/64.

¹³ Bank of England Archive, Ref. E8/64.

¹⁴ Bank of England Archive, Ref. E8/64.

¹⁵ Bank of England Archive, Ref. E8/64..

¹⁶ Bank of England Archive, Ref. E8/37



Discovery of Roman mosaic pavement during the Bank's rebuilding c.1930s. Photograph collection, Bank of England Archive Ref. HOCO 1143.



South front of Bank and Princes Street in 1937. Note the absence of the entrances to the Underground station. Photograph collection, Bank of England Archive Ref. HOT 7.



South front and Royal Exchange in 1945. Note the two entrances to the Underground at the corner of the Bank of England. Photograph collection, Bank of England Archive Ref. HOT 99.

'there is no previous record of such pipes having been unearthed.'¹⁷ The area surrounding the Bank has in recent years yielded many impressive archaeological discoveries including the remains of a Roman amphitheatre at the nearby Guildhall in 1985. There can be little doubt of the contribution of the Bank's site in helping to piece together Roman life in London.

The path of the Walbrook River

Excavations in the City of London have also helped to provide an insight into the subterranean course of the Walbrook River. The river appeared to have become a prominent feature of the land during the establishment of the Roman city of Londinium. Although initially used for drinking water, it was victim to pollution of the growing town, and so the valley of the river became the site for other uses such as craft industries.¹⁸

Stephen Myers also suggests that 'early in the Roman occupation, land close to the Walbrook and the Thames became a desirable location for constructing residences for the wealthier classes.'¹⁹ This is certainly an aspect of Roman life that the mosaics also illustrate. Built from wood, many Roman dwellings were largely constructed to the east of the Walbrook's path, within the general site of where the Bank of England now stands.²⁰

Very little evidence of the Walbrook River remains visible in 21st century London. The river is thought to pass through the City of London from Angel, Islington, under St. Margaret's church north of the Bank, then to flow past the north-west corner of the Bank of England, before going south.²¹ The point at

which it enters the Thames can still be found at Cannon Street station, upstream from the railway bridge.²²

The impact of the Underground

When mentioning the site of the Bank of England, it is impossible to ignore the proximity of the Bank building to Bank Underground station. Plans in the Bank of England Archive illustrate the engineering complexities of the subway stations surrounding the Bank, with one showing the Bank building's proximity to tunnels for the former Central London Railway, and its accompanying platforms.²³

Proposals had been drawn in 1892 for adding stairways from street level at the Bank of England to the platforms below.²⁴ However, this did not materialise and it wasn't until the 1930s that the proximity of the Underground network impacted on the aesthetics of the Bank. A growing increase in people traffic had led to calls for an access point at the Bank of England site as it had become the only point in the area which was not yet served by an entrance.²⁵ This led to discussions of providing access via the corner of Princes Street and Threadneedle Street, where the Bank prominently stood.

However, as the construction of the entrances would affect the exterior wall designed by Sir John Soane, architect Sir Herbert Baker submitted drawings for two alternative methods to approaching the impact of the staircases. In a letter to Executive Director of the Bank of England on 15 November 1938 Baker said that his drawing which showed, 'opening up the colonnade

to the entablature I think is undoubtedly a very much more beautiful and respectful treatment of Soane's wall.'²⁶

Indeed, support from the Bank's architects who had been working on the rebuilding of the Bank for the previous decade added a degree of support to the debate. A note dated 10th November 1938 declared that 'after consulting the Bank's architects it seems that it would be possible structurally, and not unsightly from an architectural point of view, to make an entrance on either side of the Princes Street and Threadneedle Street corner.'²⁷ A week following this statement the Bank's Court of Directors' agreed to the construction of the entrances to Bank station along with the space required, on the proviso that the work was adhered to in accordance with plans put forward by Sir Herbert Baker.²⁸

To this day, Bank station along with its 'sister' station, Monument, continues to be a busy intersection on the doorstep of the Bank of England; it currently provides access to 5 tube lines and a Dockland Light Railway terminus.

The Bank of England's site encapsulates many different phases of London's history, ranging from its geology, to Roman life, and also more modern twentieth century engineering; hopefully you will be reminded of this next time you walk past the Bank's prominent stone walls. ●

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Barings and its buildings

Clara Harrow

The Baring Archive contains material from the establishment in 1762 of the London merchant house of John & Francis Baring & Co, later known as Baring Brothers, through to the firm's acquisition by ING in 1995. As in the history of its business transactions, the history of Barings' premises reflects not only the growth of its own business but also the growth of the City of London as a whole and the development of the international capital markets. Relevant documents include deeds, architectural plans, photographs, engravings and personal accounts.

Baring Brothers had a number of addresses in the City of London during the first decade of its existence notably Queen Street, St Paul's Church Yard and 35 Mark Lane. In 1769 the business moved to 6 Mincing Lane near Fenchurch Street and then after 23 years the bank moved to 11 Devonshire Square where it remained until 1806.

Barings would stay at its next address, 8 Bishopsgate for nearly two centuries and the deeds in the archive describe the acquisition and transfer of the property from 1798 onwards when the property was conveyed to Charles Wall (Sir Francis Baring's business partner and son-in-law) for £6,000. In 1810 Charles Wall conveyed the Bishopsgate property to Alexander and Henry Baring, the sons of Francis Baring for £10,000. Then in 1850 the property (now clearly identified as numbers 7, 8 and 9 Bishopsgate) was conveyed by 2nd Lord Ashburton to senior partners Thomas Bates and Joshua Baring. Ownership then seems to have passed to each successive group of partners as an asset held outside the partnership.

The acquisition of neighbouring plots reflects the expansion of the business: 13 Bishopsgate in 1887; an 80 year lease on 12, 14 and 16 Bishopsgate in 1906 and then the acquisition sometime between



Image is a courtesy of The Baring Archive Limited.

1906 and 1912 of Numbers 10 and 11 Bishopsgate. In 1945 the bank acquired 145 Leadenhall Street for backward expansion. Throughout this period the business address remained No. 8 Bishopsgate even once the street had been renumbered so that Barings' building was out of sequence.

Architectural plans in the archive reveal various schemes to make the most of the space available. 1853 saw the first major rebuilding scheme with William Cubitt & Co as builders and Lewis Cubitt as architect. A courtyard was filled in to create a banking hall and partners room. The second major rebuild took place in 1885 when Richard Norman Shaw was commissioned to fill the rest of the courtyard with a new building that would front Bishopsgate. Nearly 30 years later in 1912 the architect

Gerald Horsley was commissioned to design a new building so that the bank's offices could be extended sideways along Bishopsgate. Modern amenities were gradually added to the extended buildings: a water closet and gas lighting in 1853; electricity in the 1880s; the first telephone in 1904; and in 1913 the first lift.

Engravings and photographs in the collection captured the buildings for posterity. The 1885 the Norman Shaw façade was documented in a publication entitled 'Round London; An Album of Pictures from Photographs of the Chief Places of Interest in and around London'. While in March 1914 the 'Architectural Review' showcased recently completed building work.

Personal accounts serve to conjure up the atmosphere of these lost buildings.



Image is a courtesy of The Baring Archive Limited.

In 1886 a journalist for *The Daily News* wrote of the Bishopsgate office: 'For myself, I have no objection to its high narrow windows and stony front for that means the safety of valuable property; nor can you cavil at the low, arched doorway, with its two swinging doors, through whose glass panes you look up the long passage into the serene and mystic interior, where gentlemanly clerks deal with heaps of gold as children deal with a handful of hazelnuts.'

The archive also contains an account by J Walter Wood, who was employed as a clerk at Barings for a few months from 1888 to 1889: 'The silence was impressive, and the great banking room, with its mellowed features seen through the soft light was very dignified. No-one seemed in a hurry. Business did not really begin 'til about 11 o'clock and was usually over by 4 o'clock. For those clerks who remained at work until 5 o'clock, tea with thin slices of buttered bread was served by the liveried 'walkers' [bank messengers]. The partners' room adjoined the general office, and was more like a gentleman's library, with a cheerful open fire in a marble mantelpiece at the end of the room, and a soft red and

blue rug. The mahogany desks were massive, and the chairs deeply upholstered in dark leather. In the centre of the room was a large table with a limited number of necessary reference books, and from the walls deceased partners of the House looked down from mellowed gilt frames.'

The Archive's recent project, 'An Oral History of Barings' also provides an invaluable source for descriptions of Barings' buildings. The collection includes anecdotes relating to fire-watching at Bishopsgate during the Blitz, descriptions of the great street lamp that hung outside the building, as well as the oak panelled banking hall and 'the Box' where the General Manager sat.

Barings' buildings survived a WW1 Zeppelin bomb attack and a direct hit from a British shell. However, by 1973 the building had become a rabbit warren of small offices. Plans to widen Bishopsgate meant that the site needed to be vacated and the bank therefore relocated to 88 Leadenhall Street seizing the opportunity to erect a new office at their historic address. A new 20 storey building was occupied from October 1981.

The move was a significant moment in Barings' history and a commemorative coin on which both the old and new buildings are depicted was struck to mark the occasion and was distributed to all staff.

As the business continued to expand through the 1980s and 1990s the small floor size of the Bishopsgate building was held responsible for compartmentalisation and poor communication. A general lack of space meant that the other branches of the business were housed elsewhere. Plans were put in place to move to 60 London Wall in 1995. By the time that move took place Barings had been acquired by ING.

The story of Barings' buildings illustrates how far this merchant bank had been transformed into a multi-national business. Barings had gone from a mixed use building comprising accommodation and business premises to a modern open plan office with a large trading floor. The business is moving once again in 2016 and ING's new premises at Ten Moorgate will continue to reflect the financial and cultural heritage of the company in a modern and well-appointed space. ●

Banking on its own architects.

National Provincial Bank in the interwar years

Sally Cholewa

National Provincial Bank of England¹, established in 1833 as one of a new breed of shareholder-owned banks, aimed from the outset to create an extensive national branch network by opening offices across England and Wales. In its first year the bank opened fifteen branches and continued to grow throughout the 19th century, having around 200 branches by 1900. New branches were often opened in leased premises that could easily be altered for banking purposes and re-fronted. Banks recognised that they might need to move in the first ten years or so if business increased, so purpose-built branches were not seen as economical first premises.

Branch expansion

After the First World War, encouraged by the prospect of a post-war boom, many British banks were poised to embark upon branch expansion and refurbishment programmes on a significant scale. Purpose-built branch premises began to be seen as a convenient way to underpin such rapid expansion. National Provincial Bank of England's own network had swollen to around 700 branches by the mid-1920s making it one of England's so-called 'big five' high street names, joined by Midland, Westminster, Barclays and Lloyds. This exponential rise in branch numbers across the banking sector created a wealth of work for architects and architectural firms. Such work would generally be carried out on a contractual basis, remunerated by commission that was paid in instalments. The Royal Institute of British Architects published a recommended scale of professional charges for all such work which was calculated as a percentage of the overall construction costs.²

1 In 1924 the bank's name was shortened to National Provincial Bank.

2 1919 Royal Institute of British Architects scale of fees for new works: 6% if cost of construction was more than £2000, 10% if less than £2000.



Frederick Charles Richard Palmer, architect to National Provincial Bank and Walter Frederick Charles Holden, assistant architect, in 1933 The Royal Bank of Scotland Group plc © 2016.

Palmer and Holden

In 1920 National Provincial Bank of England appointed Frederick Charles Richard Palmer to act as the bank's surveyor and, unusually, admitted him to the staff, with a salary of £1,250 per annum.³ Prior to being employed by the bank, Palmer had worked as architect and surveyor to the General Post Office. There were a number of striking similarities between the roles which may explain why National Provincial Bank chose to hire Palmer. Both roles were focused on large numbers of a single type of building, ranging from small local to large principal offices. Both also demanded architecture and design which invoked a sense of trustworthiness and a clear counter-marked division between the staff and public areas.

Walter Frederick Clarke Holden was to join Palmer in 1920, initially as a probationary draughtsman, before becoming

assistant surveyor in 1921.⁴ Typically surveyors provided advice regarding costs, design and building regulations. Palmer and Holden did much more than this; they oversaw entire construction projects from assessing the suitability of a site to initial design, to submission of plans and final completion on the ground. They were responsible for a range of projects from simple branch alterations to complete new builds, designing both the exterior and the interior space. In late 1926, after a recommendation made by the bank's Salaries Committee, which determined senior staff appointments, Palmer and Holden's titles were officially changed to architect and assistant architect⁵ to fully reflect the true nature of their roles.

Usual practice was for banks to contract a number of individual architects or architectural firms of varying experience at

4 Royal Bank of Scotland Archives NAT/1699/1.

5 Royal Bank of Scotland Archives NAT/1699/2.



Norwich branch not long after the new purpose-built branch was completed in 1925. The Royal Bank of Scotland Group plc © 2016.



Artist's impression of the proposed new Coventry branch, c.1928. The Royal Bank of Scotland Group plc © 2016.

the same time, to work on different kinds of building - such as head offices or branches - or in particular localities. These architects would also continue to take commissions from other clients. National Provincial Bank instead chose to put their confidence in just two men. A precedent had already been set by National Provincial Bank for favouring one architect to meet all of their architectural needs. In November 1862 the bank's Branch Committee resolved that John Gibson should be appointed as architect to the bank and detailed the terms of the arrangement made regarding remuneration.⁶ From this point on it appears that Gibson had a close and highly successful relationship with the bank for at least 20 years, designing many of the bank's branch alterations and new builds, as well as its Bishopsgate head office in 1866.⁷ He did, however, also continue to take commissions from elsewhere. The quality and calibre of Gibson's work for National Provincial Bank of England has prompted him to be described by John Booker, the historian of British bank architecture, as 'the most distinguished and prolific of Victorian architects in that field.'⁸ It was perhaps the success of this earlier relationship that encouraged National Provincial Bank to consider investing both financially and reputationally in salaried architects.

Palmer's and Holden's agreements, unlike Gibson's, required them to devote all of their time to the bank's work, and not to undertake any private practice.⁹ The resulting limitation of their architectural endeavours to National Provincial Bank buildings alone could be argued to have both positive and negative aspects. By working for just one company the architects were able to influence the choice of site and materials, be readily on hand at all times and develop a clear vision of both the bank's business requirements and the board's tastes. However, as C H Reilly, Professor of Architecture at Liverpool University, wrote in 1932 in one of the many pieces he contributed to *The Banker* on the subject of bank buildings, 'no architects could be successful designers of banks who did nothing else.'¹⁰ He believed that their imagination and artistic flair would surely become stagnated, producing uninteresting buildings in an unprogressive house style. In fact, there are numerous examples of Palmer and Holden working in a variety of styles, often at the same time, when designing both alterations and purpose-built branches. Notable new builds created by the partnership include a 'Wrenaissance'-style branch at Norwich in 1924, a Neo-Georgian branch at Southampton in 1927-9, a Jacobean branch at Peterborough in 1928-9, a Classical branch at Coventry in 1928-30 and an Art Deco branch at Osterley in 1935. To

convey the huge scope and quality of their work, despite their ties to one employer and to one type of building, and to indicate why the bank chose to salary their architects, three of these branches will now be discussed in more detail.

Norwich branch

Norwich was one of the first purpose-built branch buildings that Palmer and Holden completed. There had been a branch in Norwich, located on London Street, since 1866. By 1917 the accommodation was found to be insufficient and a proposal was made to extend the building. The bank's surveyor did not approve and the plan was dropped. Instead, National Provincial decided to purchase new premises for the branch and in 1919, just before Palmer was hired, bought 51 and 43 London Street.

Initial plans were drawn up in 1920 by architects Bromley & Watkins of Nottingham, who had previously designed the bank's Wolverhampton branch. These plans were for alterations only. On inspecting the site Palmer disagreed. He believed the position of the new site was so good that he recommended completely rebuilding the premises to take full advantage of the corner site. The location of a new branch was understandably extremely important. Its prominent positioning in relation to competitor banks and the town's business centre would affect its business. Corner sites were coveted as they were more visible and accessible;

⁶ Royal Bank of Scotland Archives NAT/1/9.

⁷ Waterhouse, P. 'Gibson, John (1817-1892)' in *Dictionary of National Biography*, supplement (Smith, Elder & Co, London, 1901). Available at: <wikisource.org/wiki/Gibson,_John_(1817-1892)> (DNB01).

⁸ Booker, J. *Temples of Mammon. The Architecture of Banking* (Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 1990), p.71.

⁹ Royal Bank of Scotland Archives NAT/1699/1.

¹⁰ *The Banker*, vol.23, no.78, p.74.



Ground floor plan showing the position of Coventry branch in relation to the adjoining shops, drawn by Palmer and Holden in 1928. The Royal Bank of Scotland Group plc © 2016.

their double frontage also offered the architect two chances to impress and influence the passing public.

The new Norwich branch was completed in 1925. The single-storey stone building's east-facing entrance was framed by giant Corinthian columns under a broken triangular pediment. Classical detailing, such as panels with feathery ribbons, fruit and flowers, were used throughout. Inside the pillars and carved domed ceiling created a very impressive and spacious banking hall. The branch was later described in the bank's staff magazine as 'a very fine specimen of architecture of the period in an unusual Georgian style'.¹¹

This 'unusual Georgian style' was described by Nikolaus Pevsner, a respected 20th century architectural historian, as 'Wrenaissance' (properly known as Edwardian Baroque), a revival of late 17th century architecture in which themes from designs by Wren, in this case his City of London churches, were prominent. British architect Sir Edwin Lutyens was a leading exponent and designed many commercial buildings in this style in the 1910s and 1920s, including some for Midland Bank. Typical details include extensive

rustication, domed pavilions and a central tower-like element, all of which were present in the Norwich branch.

Coventry branch

National Provincial Bank of England's Coventry branch opened in 1906 and operated from temporary premises on the High Street, until more permanent premises were acquired on the corner of Hertford Street and Smithford Street (now Broadgate) in 1909. This was an excellent location for the branch but the premises were not as large or prestigious as the bank wanted for such a thriving office. In the mid 1920s an opportunity arose to rectify this situation by acquiring the land surrounding the branch and erecting an impressive new building. Work began in 1928 and the new bank was completed two years later.

Palmer and Holden, with nearly a decade of designing branch banks behind them, were not afraid to deviate from the accepted convention with the design of this build. As one commentator noted the building's plan was 'a new departure in bank planning in that practically the whole of the frontage is devoted to shops, while the bank requires only the frontage necessary to provide two entrances, the bank office occupying the less valuable space at

the rear'¹². The impressive porticoed Broadgate entrance still provided the expected and traditional characteristics that allowed the public to identify the premises as a bank, but the building as a whole offered something more to the urban landscape of central Coventry. A local newspaper stated 'it will give Coventry one of the finest amenities in the centre of the city that should be desired, possessing a distinction and impressive size that will add greatly to the appearance of Broadgate and Hertford Street.'

The interior reflected the form and scale of the exterior. The impressive banking hall, clad in pale green marble, was top lit by a large glass lantern with geometric glazing. The ceilings to the hall and entrance vestibules were coffered and there was triglyph and coin metope decoration to the cornicing. This coin detailing is also to be found on the exterior of the building, with motifs appearing on both the entablature and stainless steel doors to both entrances. The doors were designed by Holden and the same motifs were later used, even after his time, throughout other branches of National Provincial

11 Royal Bank of Scotland Archives NAT/166/86.

12 Royal Bank of Scotland Archives Norwich secondary source file.

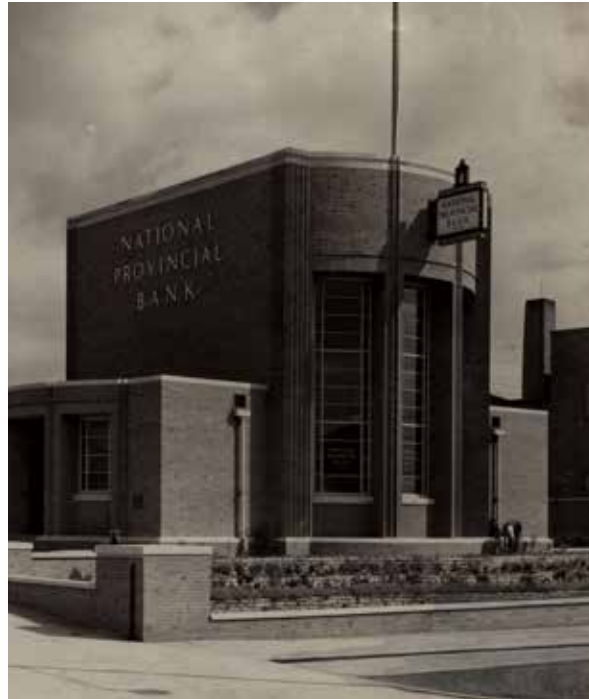
Bank, among them Southend-on-Sea, Middlesbrough and Islington. It could be argued that this coin motif became a subtle unifying feature that enabled the perceptive customer to identify a National Provincial Bank branch regardless of its architectural style.

Osterley and Isleworth branch

Palmer died in December 1934, after almost 15 years working solely for the bank, and Holden naturally succeeded him to the position of architect. One of the first branches Holden completed in the more senior role was Osterley and Isleworth which he designed in Art Deco style. Construction began in 1935 on the corner of Syon Lane, Osterley, and the branch opened in September 1936. C.H. Reilly had earlier questioned 'Can they [Palmer and Holden] design a bank in the modern manner free from traditional proportion and detail?'¹³ Osterley and Isleworth branch was to provide him with an answer.

Modernism emerged as a reaction to the perceived indulgences of the Edwardian era and it adhered to the notion that 'form follows function', meaning that the product of design should derive directly from its purpose. The traditional convention was for bank buildings to be designed in a Classical, Italianate or Renaissance style which was intended to express the stability, wealth and trustworthiness of the banks. Modernism, however, rejected the unnecessary details and flourishes found in these styles, embracing instead simplicity and clarity of form. Art Deco, with its clean lines, minimal decoration and geometric shapes, was closely aligned to Modernism. Often associated with such modern building types as cinemas, hotels and factories, it was rarely used for branch banks. It did, however, still suggest a desire to impress, which constituted a vital part of the overall *architectural* language of the banks.

Osterley and Isleworth branch is a single-storey building of brown brick with Portland stone dressings. The bowed façade of the banking hall has three tall windows, separated by columns with brick ribs, which continue as features in the stone parapet above. The large windows created a bright and spacious banking area in which business could be conducted. This scheme is



Osterley and Isleworth branch in 1937. The Royal Bank of Scotland Group plc © 2016.

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replicated in the bowed entrance, with its central recessed doorway. The interior public space was laid in slabs of travertine, which was beginning to replace the more expensive marble that had been commonplace in the earlier branches. There was timber panelling to the walls and piers, with brick ribs reaching to the ceiling, reflecting those found on the exterior. The long counter front was of laurel-wood veneer. Customers, on coming through the vestibule and entering the single-height public space, were greeted by a double-height banking area which created a sense of grandeur and spaciousness.

Historian John Booker describes the new branch in glowing terms: 'Osterley was a triumph, a thoroughly purposeful bank..., original in design, functional without austerity [and] above all the bank was sympathetic to its environment.'¹⁴ Indeed, it had been deliberately designed to form a group with the adjacent Sir Banister Fletcher's monumental Art Deco Gillette factory. The factory, with its distinctive clock tower, was also built in brown brick with a stone trim, and has large expanses of metal-framed glazing. The National Provincial Bank branch, although considerably smaller and set off to one side, held its own as an individual building of some architectural merit.

Holden retired in March 1947 on a salary of £2,095 after a quarter of a century with the bank. He died six years later. In a similar fashion to his own earlier advancement, the deputy architect at the time, B C Sherren, was promoted to take his place, and went on to have a successful career as architect for National Provincial Bank throughout the 1950s and 1960s. No subsequent architectural partnership at the bank was, however, as prolific or as creative as that of Palmer and Holden. In 1939, C H Reilly, who just seven years earlier had doubted that a salaried bank architect could be a success in design terms, made a complete about-turn writing in *The Banker* that 'by virtue of his salaried position Holden is freer in his attack than usual bank architects. He can suggest all kinds of new things.'¹⁵

By employing dedicated and salaried architects, National Provincial Bank had created a relationship with its architects unlike any other British bank at the time, enabling it to create branches that were not only ideally suited to their purpose and location, but also architecturally impressive and innovative. ●

¹³ *The Banker*, vol.23, no.78, p.75.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, Booker, 1990, p.241.

¹⁵ *The Banker*, vol.52, no.156, pp.76-90.

A Solid Foundation.

The St. Louis Fed's Building

Steve Greene

During its initial 10 years, the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis lived a nomadic existence in the downtown area. After opening for business on Nov. 16, 1914, at the Boatman's Bank Building at Olive and Broadway (the current Marquette Building), the Bank relocated several times within downtown St. Louis to accommodate growth in staff.

Land for the current building at Broadway and Locust was purchased in 1918, but high construction costs delayed the groundbreaking until 1923. The building was designed by the architectural firm Mullan, Russell and Crowell with an impressive neo-classic style. It was constructed of Bedford, Ind., limestone and Rockville, Minn., granite. Medallions were carved into the stone with the coats of arms of the United States and of each state the Eighth District serves. When the Bank opened the doors of its new building on June 1, 1925, it included 219,000 square feet of floor space.

The building sits atop the Bank's vault, which was designed to be 'as near burglar, mob, fire, and explosive proof as science and engineering skills can make them.' The vault's 44-ton, 30-inch-thick door still exists today.

Over the years, the St. Louis Fed headquarters has undergone several renovations. An annex, consisting of 25,000 square feet, was added in 1946. Property adjacent to the Bank, the former Nugent's Department Store, was bought by the Bank and rehabilitated in 1949. In 1991, the Bank's lobby, research library and mezzanine floor underwent renovations.

Following the turn of the 21st century, the Bank considered building a brand new facility, but elected to stay in the heart of downtown St. Louis and undergo a major renovation of the entire building. Improvements included: constructing a new attached tower; recladding the



Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis exterior in 1925, the year the building opened. © St. Louis Fed.

former Nugent's building to provide a cohesive exterior appearance; modernizing the conference and dining facilities; and greatly enhancing the physical security in the wake of the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001.

An especially dynamic addition to the building was completed in the fall of 2014, when the St. Louis Fed opened the Inside the Economy® Museum. Through nearly 100 exhibits, the museum demystifies the economy by immersing visitors in a one-of-a-kind experience, engaging them in a hands-on, interactive journey through exhibits that explore topics such as:

- Opportunity Cost
- Scarcity
- Consumer Markets
- Bartering and Trading
- Money Circulation
- Banking
- Inflation
- Unemployment
- The Global Economy

- The History and Role of the Federal Reserve

Exhibits are brought to life through interactive displays, games, sculptures and videos. Also included in the museum is a multipurpose classroom for groups. The Inside The Economy Museum is yet another way that the St. Louis Fed promotes economic education and financial literacy. Groups and walk-in visitors are welcome at the museum, and admission is free. More than 15,000 visitors have visited the museum in its first 15 months of existence.

Now more than 90 years old, the St. Louis Fed's headquarters building continues to be functional, up-to-date and secure. The Bank's Facilities staff—which includes engineers, carpenters and painters—combines with staff in the Bank's Information Technology Services and Law Enforcement departments to ensure that a historic structure continues to serve the needs of the modern world. ●



Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis exterior. © St. Louis Fed.



Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis exterior. © St. Louis Fed.



Inside the Economy® Museum. © St. Louis Fed.



Inside the Economy® Museum. © St. Louis Fed.

Architecture of a venerable institution. The evolution of World Bank buildings

Bill Katzenstein

Since its founding nearly seventy years ago, the World Bank has been located three blocks west of the White House in Washington DC. While remaining at its original address—1818 H Street NW—the Bank has undergone tremendous change, as have the architecture and style of its buildings over more than half a century. Notably, the architecture of the buildings has come to reflect the modern Bank and its self-image as an openly involved, innovative organization pursuing diverse development lending and global discourse. From this perspective, the single most pivotal event in the evolution of the architecture of the World Bank was a competition held in 1989 for the design of the reconstruction of the organization's main complex of buildings. The winning entry by the New York design firm of Kohn Pedersen Fox reflected the Bank as a dynamic organization stressing high operational standards.

One condition imposed on Bank buildings has hardly changed through its history: the limit on the height of buildings in Washington DC. In effect, no World Bank building at the organization's headquarters can be more than 13 stories high above-grade, which explains its relatively sizable 'campus' of buildings.

Early history

When the World Bank opened for business on June 25, 1946, it occupied the tenth floor of the then U.S. government building at 1818 H Street, which faces the small Edward R. Murrow Park along Pennsylvania Avenue. Within six months, the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) had leased the entire building. The structure, completed in 1941, had been in use by the U.S. Department of State. The Bank purchased the edifice



'A' building - Early History. Photo are in the custody and control of the World Bank Group Archives.

in 1957. The IMF acquired its own space the following year.

This initial Bank building would come to be known simply as the 'A' Building after the Bank acquired additional facilities within the same 1800 block of H Street. The 'A' Building, of plain, strictly functional design,

would suffice to accommodate the organization in the 1950s. In its early years the World Bank grew at a slow pace, unable to assume the major role intended in post-World War II reconstruction: With the advent of the Cold War, the mission originally foreseen for the Bank had been largely supplanted by the

Marshall Plan and other bilateral aid. However in the 1960s and beyond, the Bank would thrive and rapidly expand into its ultimate missions of economic development and poverty alleviation.

In 1961, to accommodate increased lending activity and additional staff, the Bank acquired the apartment building next to the 'A' Building, which was subsequently remodeled as an office building, and named 'B' Building. An additional structure was purchased on the same block but wholly demolished, and a new office building erected, called 'C' Building, which opened in 1963. The new 'B' and 'C' buildings contained the Bank's first auditorium and dining facilities.

The architecture of the three early Bank buildings was quite intentionally similar. With the replacement of the outdated single-pane windows in the original 'A' Building, the entire complex represented modern institutional architecture albeit in a somewhat 'severe' sense, unabashedly functional and businesslike without frills. This architecture clearly symbolized technocracy, and was very much similar to a number of U.S. Government facilities of the same period, including the buildings presently housing the Export-Import Bank (completed 1940) and the General Accountability Office (completed 1951).

Late 1960s and 1970s

Under Presidents George Woods (1963-1968) and Robert McNamara (1968-1981) the basic operating mode of the modern World Bank was established, and the operations and staff grew tremendously. Annual lending to developing nations increased from \$1 billion in the Bank's fiscal year 1964 to \$11 billion in 1980. Moreover, the Bank began to emphasize the alleviation of abject poverty as a principal objective, and its activities began to expand and diversify.

The World Bank erected its fourth building—the 'D' Building—in 1968, along G Street on the southeast corner of the 1800 block of H Street housing its initial three buildings. The structure was designed by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill—architects of the iconic Lever House in New York City—in distinctively modernist style with a striking curvilinear, white travertine façade and recessed windows. The 'D' Building, the dynamic front of which, facing south, was retained in the reconstruction of the Bank's main complex of buildings in 1989-1995, represented



'F' building - Late 1960s and 1970s. Photo are in the custody and control of the World Bank Group Archives.

a signal departure from the subdued style of the adjoining buildings. The Bank was beginning to emerge as a vibrant organization coming into its prime.

To further accommodate its operational expansion, the Bank would acquire two additional buildings on the same block in 1973. The IMF, which had shared the block with the Bank, erected a handsome, conservatively styled building across 19th Street, availing the Bank the opportunity to purchase the two buildings the IMF had built and occupied since 1958. These facilities, also in the non-descript modern institutional style of the Bank's initial 'A', 'B' and 'C' buildings, were named 'E' and 'F' Buildings. In sum, by the mid-1970s, the World Bank had come to own and utilize six interconnected buildings (Buildings A-F) situated about an open-air courtyard, comprising the entire 1800 block of H Street. The complex, known thereafter as the Main Complex, accommodated about 3200 staff.

Three new satellite buildings (1980-1986)

World Bank lending and the diversity of its activities continued to expand in the 1980s and into the 1990s as China followed by Eastern European countries and former Soviet states joined the institution and became major borrowers. Three additional buildings were constructed by the Bank in order to accommodate staff quartered in leased space. The new structures would each house



'I' building - Three New Satellite Buildings and 1970s. Photo are in the custody and control of the World Bank Group Archives.

on the order of 1100-1350 staff, and were more pleasant than the typical cookie-cutter commercial office buildings in the K Street Corridor three blocks north that were constructed in that era. Yet each of the new Bank buildings had a different look.

The 'I' Building was completed in 1980, at 1850 I Street, one-and-a-half blocks north of the Main Complex. The 'I' Building is of red-brick facade, modestly attractive while appearing conservative and wholly functional.

The 'H' Building, finished in 1984, was located at 600 19th Street, southwest of the Main Complex. Designed in a handsomely modernist International style, emphasizing generous application of balconied glass panels in black, beige and white tones, the structure was arguably among the most appealing of the Bank's buildings at that time.

The 'J' Building, located at 701 18th Street directly east of the Main Complex, was completed in 1986. Externally the architecture appears an odd hybrid of modern style with minor classical flourishes. The Bank had not yet found its way to a symbolic architectural style. However and more substantively, the 'J' Building was the first Bank facility designed with the future of information technology in mind; the floors were touted as featuring dedicated raised floor space for ease of computer networking. The interior of the building, which accommodates staff dedicated to Africa operations, is decorated following that motif.



'Main Complex' - Design Competition for the New Main Complex. Photo are in the custody and control of the World Bank Group Archives.

Reconstruction of the main complex (1989-1995)

In the late 1980s, the six World Bank buildings (Buildings A-F) comprising its Main Complex occupying the 1800 block of H Street ranged in age from twenty to nearly fifty years. The time had come to take stock and examine options to retrofit or reconstruct, as office buildings generally require at least a major retrofit after some thirty years. The physical plants of the older Bank structures consumed excessive energy to heat and cool, and were overly costly to maintain. The aging buildings were ill-equipped to support emerging information technologies. A further economic factor was the potential to utilize unused area permitted on the site by correcting the inherent inefficiency of the layout of the existing six buildings. Analysis indicated capacity could be increased from about 3200 to 4100-5200 staff depending on various options for reconstruction, and alternative scenarios for space standards.

Review was undertaken to determine which of several options for retrofit and reconstruction of the buildings would be most cost-effective. One option was to demolish and rebuild the entire block of six buildings; at the other extreme, the costs and benefits of only retrofitting the

buildings were examined. Ultimately the decision was taken to demolish the four older and smaller buildings ('A', 'B', 'C' and 'F') and retain but retrofit the two newer and larger buildings ('D' and 'E', dating from the late-1960s) which would be fully incorporated into the new complex. The open-air courtyard in the center of the buildings would become a glass-covered atrium, with design features permitting natural light to permeate levels below-grade. Capacity of the unified structure would be roughly 4700 staff, an increase of almost 50%. Substantial savings would further accrue in energy efficiency and building operations.

Design competition for the new main complex

In 1989 the World Bank held a worldwide architectural/engineering competition for the design of the reconstruction and retrofit of its main complex of buildings. Seventy six proposals from firms in twenty six countries were received. The field was then narrowed to eight semi-finalist firms, which were invited to prepare and submit detailed proposals.

The winning design for the new World Bank headquarters complex was submitted by Kohn Pedersen Fox. A landmark building was completed in 1995 that creatively represents the World Bank as a leading development organization grounded in expertise. Driving or walking along Pennsylvania Avenue toward the White House, the observer cannot help but note this striking modernist structure, outlined in white with horizontal glass front—suggesting dynamism, openness and engagement—while resembling in part a grid with recessed windows, implying order and analysis. The horizontal sweep of the glass front is accented by a tall mast suggesting leadership.

Passing through the front doors at 1818 H Street, the visitor enters the 45-square meter atrium, adorned with geometric designs together with what resembles a pool of blue water. The effect is calming as well as attractive and intriguing. The atrium looming ahead invites guests to step in and see more. Further, a theme of creativity is stressed in curious geometric forms appearing from place to place in the buildings, such as the three illuminated cones

in the atrium, and the patterns etched into the elevator doors.

The new Main Complex was recognized for its quality design and engineering, meriting an American Institute of Architects (AIA) Honor Award (1997), American Concrete Institute Concrete Building of the Year Award (1998), and a Progressive Architecture Design Award (1999).

As has been noted, buildings in Washington DC are generally subject to a height limitation of 40 meters. However this limit applies to occupied space, not atria. The Bank's vaulted atrium tops out at 54 meters, and is visible a kilometer away along Pennsylvania Avenue southeast of the White House. Over the next twenty years, amounting to almost a third of the organization's history, the Main Complex of buildings came to symbolize the World Bank in a positive, motivating sense.

Gradual buildup of overseas offices

Starting slowly in the 1990s, then accelerating in the early 2000s, a concerted effort was made to decentralize significant numbers of the Bank's operational staffing to regional and country offices. By 2010 the World Bank leased office space or had purchased or constructed small office buildings in about 100 locations away from its Washington headquarters. The overseas offices range in size from a few personnel to hundreds of staff. A number of the country facilities that were constructed by the Bank are very attractive as well as having been designed with close attention to environmental impact.

World Bank buildings. A seventy-year summation

World Bank buildings and architecture have evolved parallel to the development of the organization. Starting as a fairly conservative international banking institution with inconspicuous institutional buildings in functional style, the Bank became a more dynamic, innovative organization with a broad array of development programs and initiatives, and an inclusive and transparent institutional culture. The architecture of the Bank's buildings gradually changed to a modernist International style representative of its leadership roles and expertise. ●



