

The Tower at the Centralbahnplatz

*Dr Alexander Ressos, TEP
Attorney-at-Law (Switzerland), Solicitor (Hong Kong),
Solicitor (England & Wales)*

For almost half a century the BIS worked in the converted hotel at the Centralbahnplatz opposite the railway station. In the 1970s the bank built its own headquarters on a nearby site. The building, designed by the Basel architect Martin Burckhardt and completed in 1977, is a cylindrical tower of about twenty storeys whose rounded form and bronze-coloured façade have made it a landmark of the station district. Known locally simply as "the Tower" and sometimes, with an ironic glance at Babel, as the Tower of Basel, it houses the offices of the senior management, the meeting rooms of the governors and the committees and a dining room on the upper floors with a view across the Rhine valley to the Black Forest and the Vosges.¹

The growth of the bank and of the committees it hosts required additional premises. The BIS has used further buildings in the city, among them the round building at the Aeschenplatz designed by the Ticino architect Mario Botta, which was originally built for a Swiss bank in the 1990s and is referred to in BIS documents as the Botta Building. The presence of the BIS in two of the most striking modern buildings of Basel gives it a visible place in the townscape that its modest staff numbers would not suggest. The Tower has also given the title to a critical account of the bank's history by the journalist Adam LeBor, discussed below.²

1 Notes

1. On the BIS Tower at Centralbahnplatz 2, designed by Martin Burckhardt (Burckhardt + Partner) and completed in 1977, see the BIS history pages and the architectural guides to Basel. Height and number of storeys to be verified. ↩

The Tower at the Centralbahnplatz

2. On the Botta building at Aeschenplatz 1 (designed by Mario Botta, completed in 1995) and its use by the BIS, see the BIS Annual Reports and the architectural literature. Use and ownership to be verified. Status to be verified. ↩

For general information only. This article does not constitute legal or tax advice, does not replace advice on an individual case and creates no lawyer-client relationship. It reflects the legal position as of September 2026.

Online version: helveticaregister.com/basel-the-tower-at-the-centralbahnplatz