



Library
of the CAS

Important dates

1890–1952

Czech Academy of Sciences and Arts

1952–1992

Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences

since 1992

Czech Academy of Sciences

1825

the founding of Czech Savings Bank – CSB (Spořitelna česká)



1858–1863

the construction of the CSB headquarters

1893–1896

construction of the extension of the building

1945

the Czech Academy of Sciences and Arts leases the premises

1954

the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences assumes ownership of the building

The main building
of the CAS
currently houses:

Presidium of the CAS
CAS Head Office
Library of the CAS
Centre of Administration
and Operations of the CAS



Headquarters of the Czech Academy of Sciences



The building which now houses the Czech Academy of Sciences was built by the Czech Savings Bank (CSB). The banking palace was constructed in two stages, though the stylistic unity of both parts gives the impression of a single monumental entity. The older part was completed in 1863 – five years before the foundation stone of the National Theatre, right across the street, was ceremonially laid. The first bank building in Prague at the time, its height of 25 metres later determined the height of other buildings in the vicinity.

Národní 3, Prague 1

www.avcr.cz/en



The building before construction was completed

History

In 1825, the Savings Treasury for the Capital City Prague and Bohemia opened. In time, its shortened name, *Böhmische Sparkasse* – the Czech Savings Bank, caught on. Soon, the most important monetary institution in the country decided to establish its own prestigious headquarters, choosing a site in the centre of town near the Vltava River. The Neo-Renaissance design project by Czech architect Ignác Vojtěch Ullmann won the architectural competition.

In 1893, the Czech Savings Bank purchased and demolished the neighbouring houses in the direction of the riverfront. They were replaced by an extension designed by Friedrich Schachner.

The period of the World Wars meant a break in the development of Czech monetary institutions. The bank made use of the ground-floor premises alone, renting out the rest. In 1945, the Czech Academy of Sciences and Arts, the predecessor of the Czech Academy of Sciences, became one of its many tenants.

In 1950, the Communist government ordered the savings bank to leave the building, which eventually fell to the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences. After the break-up of Czechoslovakia, it became the headquarters of the newly established Czech Academy of Sciences.

Décor

The façade of the older part of the building is dominated by a sculptural work titled *Bohemia Accepts the Savings of the People*, based on design drawings by Josef Mánes. The symmetrically positioned variation on the original sculpture can be found on the extension to the original building.

The current main entrance opens into a vestibule with a marble staircase adorned with two life-size statues of lions cast in bronze from models made by Josef Václav Myslbek and his pupils.

The former banking atrium rises to a height of two storeys. The roofing is supported by pillars adorned with the crests of Bohemian cities, the lower flat roof of the atrium comprises a metal framework into which 684 sheets of glass with decorative etchings are set. The dominant feature of the atrium are the two allegorical statues *Thrift* and *Frugality*, made of Carrara marble and based on designs by Myslbek. The ceiling of the gallery above the atrium is decorated by a painting titled *The Allegory of Generosity* by Eduard Veith, who also contributed to the décor of the Hofburg in Vienna and today's State Opera in Prague.

The opposite side of the gallery features a relief decoration in the form of a hive, the symbol of saving. The marble plaque bears a Latin inscription, which reads: 'The directorate of this treasury, which has been dedicated to the use of citizens since 1825, had this spacious atrium built in 1896 for the needs of the public'.



We live for science

In addition to the management of the institution, the building on Národní Street houses the Library of the CAS and two supporting departments – the CAS Head Office and the Centre of Administration and Operations of the CAS.

The representative rooms and the neo-Baroque atrium which houses the study hall of the library also serve as a space for ceremonies, conferences, and lectures. Visitors can admire the splendour of the building and learn something interesting, for example, at the Week of the CAS, the largest science festival in the Czech Republic, and the Week of the Brain, which presents the latest discoveries and trends in neuroscience.

Visitors can also visit the Science and Art Gallery every weekday to see exhibitions prepared for the public by CAS institutes.

For up-to-date information on what is happening in our building on Národní, please follow the website and social media of the Czech Academy of Sciences.

