The ICBC Headquarters, China's largest and most prestigious bank, occupies a key site in the new financial district of Beijing on West Chang'an Street within close proximity to Tiananmen Square and the entrance to the Forbidden City. The site occupies an entire city block.

The initial phase of the headquarters building, executed by the firm of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, introduced the design theme of a "round heaven and square ground"—specifically a square building with a round landscaped central courtyard, half of which was constructed in August 1998. In anticipation of an eventual completion of this concept, all demolition and relocation relating to the full block site was constructed during the first phase.

Because of the bank's continued growth and the resulting need for expanded home office facilities, ICBC commissioned Pei Partnership Architects to design the second and final phase of the overall project in mid-2006. The program for this phase totals 60,000 sq. meters (645,000 sq. ft.), which is accommodated in a 10-story building with 3 basement levels. Construction was completed in 2010 and the bank moved in at the start of 2011.

Although the exterior treatment resembles that of the first phase building, the interior planning is completely different. In addition to greatly expanded office facilities, the principal programmatic requirements include a full floor double-height state-of-the-art trading hall with meeting rooms and lounge areas, expanded food services including management and staff restaurants, a ground floor double-height reception hall, executive banking facilities with integrated communications and multimedia conferencing systems. New entrances are located on the east and west sides of the north elevation, with a ceremonial entrance to the reception hall in the center. New bridges connect the upper executive office floors to the first phase building. Generous light wells bring daylight throughout the interior spaces all the way to the entrance lobbies. These light wells provide three different ways of integrating light into the architecture imparting a sense of liveliness and animation to the space.

Following precedents established in the first phase, materials include an aluminum curtain wall, clear insulated glass and grey granites. Marble and wood are used for the interior. The materials are elegantly understated and impeccably detailed, projecting an image of quiet, unpretentious efficiency. The ICBC Headquarters offers a stately and welcoming environment for visitors, staff and management. This is conveyed in every aspect of the design, from the thoughtful application of sustainable building materials and the clear disposition of parts, to the meticulous detailing of public spaces and the widespread integration of natural light, landscaping and outdoor views.
Industrial and Commercial Bank of China
Headquarters
Beijing, China

View from central court
Industrial and Commercial Bank of China
Headquarters
Beijing, China

Central lobby
Industrial and Commercial Bank of China
Headquarters
Beijing, China

Lobby at West Wing