

Faculty of Architecture, CTU in Prague
2024/25

summer semester

Diploma thesis – opponent's review

Title of diploma thesis: Expo Istanbul

Author: Bc. İdil Boydak

Design studio: Achten–Pavlíček–Sýsová

Supervisor of diploma thesis: prof. Dr. Henri Hubertus Achten

Assistant professor: Ing. arch. M. Arch. Jiří Pavlíček, PhD.

Opponent: Ing. arch. Pavel Špringl

Verbal evaluation

The aim of the diploma thesis was to design a new exhibition complex for the city of Istanbul in a way that reflects the city's evolving role as a center of commerce, technology, and culture, while also addressing the shortcomings of the current infrastructure and enabling easier access for visitors and participants. The scope of the project includes identifying a suitable location within the city and its surroundings, developing an overall urban concept, and continuing with the detailed design of key buildings, including floor plans.

Urban and Architectural Design:

The close connection between the old airport and the current exhibition grounds served as a model for the new design's layout and functions. Since the new airport has been relocated far to the north, outside the city, placing the new exhibition center nearby is logical.

Good infrastructure is very important in a large city, and the student clearly focused on transportation links. The location would function well from a practical point of view. However, being connected to the airport and public transport might not be the most important factor in the city's overall structure. An exhibition center also has many cultural roles. Because it is somewhat separated from the city, it is worth considering whether it can still function naturally, create synergy, and contribute to city life.

The radial layout of the urban scheme is a very intelligent solution that responds to the shape of the site and offers benefits in terms of orientation and natural gradation of the area toward the center. The decision to place the urban core by the shoreline is well thought out. It transforms the continuous circular form into a clear, focused "stage" with a logical distribution of functions. The overall layout of infrastructure – pedestrian areas, parking, metro access, and port facilities – is well resolved.

Function layout:

The exhibition halls are arranged in a way that provides sufficient green areas and spaces for relaxation. The proportion between built-up and public space is well balanced. In addition to the hotel and the main auditorium, I expected more supporting service functions within the complex. Dining areas and indoor relaxation spaces are missing.

The design of the exhibition hall is simple, which suits its purpose. Greater attention was given to the visual quality of the facade. The main building could benefit from more detailed design development, but its function is clearly understandable.

Technical design: -

The student used a reliable prefabricated hall system, and the technical solution is solid. The auditorium is smartly designed using the same system, with its importance shown mainly through the distinctive roof shape.

Formal and graphic aspects of the project, and completeness

The thesis is divided into clear sections. The explanation of typological issues is straightforward and engaging. The analysis and design process is well organized, making the entire presentation easy to understand. The program is clearly laid out.

However, I would have liked to see more detail in the drawings describing parts of the design: the transportation plan, central public space, hotel, and other elements could benefit from clearer drawings, proper scales, labels, or supplementary diagrams to better show their features and connection to public spaces. These drawings should clearly communicate the main idea of the project, but because they are similar and numerous, they unfortunately appear too anonymous and somewhat dull. The focus on public space is not sufficiently expressed in the graphics, though the content itself is solid.

Inquiries for the Defense

Can you give an example of an exhibition center that was converted, rebuilt, or completely closed down? How did these examples influence your thoughts about how long your own design might last?

Where have most new exhibition centers been built since 2010? Why do you think there has been so much investment and focus in this area?

Final summary and grade proposal

The overall urban design is very good. The student showed a clear understanding of space and how different parts of the project connect and work together. The location choice can be discussed because it seems a bit separated from the city. But for an exhibition center that doesn't need to operate all year or be fully connected to the city, this might not be a big problem.

What is fundamentally missing from a project of this scale is a deeper reflection on sustainability and the long-term environmental impact, both in terms of construction and operation.

The author has demonstrated both technical and design competence, and I evaluate the work with the grade: **B – Velmi dobře**

In Prague, on May 30, 2025

Pavel Špringl