

Course Title	Code	Semester	Hours (T+P)	Credit	ECTS
DIPLOMA PROJECT	ARCH 402	8	4 + 4	6	12
Pre-requisite	ARCH 401				
Language of course	English				
Course Type (Required / Elective)	Required				
Course Coordinators	Prof. Dr. Selim Ökem (selim.okem@marmara.edu.tr), Assoc. Prof. Dr. Akin Tolga İter (tolga.ilter@marmara.edu.tr)				
Instructors / Mail	Prof. Dr. Selim Ökem (selim.okem@marmara.edu.tr), Assoc. Prof. Dr. Akin Tolga İter (tolga.ilter@marmara.edu.tr)				
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Goals	ARCH 402 Diploma Project / MIM 402 Diploma Projesi, as the 8th semester's course in the Curriculum of the Marmara University, Faculty of Architecture and Design, School of Architecture, is the graduation project. The course prepares architecture students for the profession of architecture. It is the last stage of the students' education and is a process in which the regular critical-discussion environments that are customary are diluted. It is aimed to develop skills of making architectural decisions with interim critiques (such as workshops, juries, seminars and sketch exams) organized within a certain calendar. In the diploma project course, the students are expected to go through a design process by adding the knowledge, experience, equipment and skills gained in all architectural education. While doing this, they are expected to make an architectural interpretation by evaluating the different scales and contexts of architecture from an interdisciplinary perspective.
Learning Outcomes	• Ability to carry out an architectural design-project process individually and together with intermittent jury meetings, with all its complex dimensions. • To be able to define the problems and potentials of an urban fabric with different dimensions such as history, culture, topography. • To be able to develop an original architectural program and establish creative and mixed spatial relationships on a semi-structured, generally defined project brief. • To be able to define the relationship and contextual framework of architectural design with "place." • To provide a comprehensive integration of design knowledge between different scales, social and environmental impacts. And turning it into an architectural project, • Ability to interpret the architectural program using creative and complex relationships, • Ability to use various expression methods in all processes of architectural design (to express an idea, to represent it in 2D or 3D, etc.)

Course Content

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK, CONTEXT AND PROGRAM

TEKFUR: LATE BYZANTINE PERIOD MUSEUM, ARKEO-PARK, AND CULTURAL CENTER

The 2025-2026 Diploma Project aims for a holistic reinterpretation of the derelict/vacant areas immediately adjacent to the section of the Tekfur Palace (Porphyrogenetos Palace) currently used as a museum, located in the Ayvansaray neighborhood of Istanbul's Fatih district. The Diploma Project targets the development of the Tekfur Palace and its surroundings into an Archaeology Park and Late Byzantine Period Museum, the strengthening of spatial dialogue with the Historic Land Walls, and the organization of the Edirnekapi-Ayvansaray axis as a History, Culture, Learning Environment, and Social Center.

At the threshold point where the land walls meet the Golden Horn, the unique spatial configuration formed by the trilogy of walls-topography-neighborhood brings together both the city's historical continuity and contemporary living practices on the same stage. This project will investigate a scenario for an Archaeo-park and Cultural Center at this threshold that enhances the visibility of archaeological layers and nurtures contemporary culture and art production. The project site is provided in the Location/Study Area section.

As emphasized by Wolfgang Müller-Wiener in his book "İstanbul'un Tarihsel Topografyası" (The Historical Topography of Istanbul, 2016), the area around Tekfur Palace and Blachernae is at the heart of a morphology formed by the layering of imperial residences, defense networks, and sacred sites. The sloping topography, series of walls, and interstitial spaces create interfaces that are today fragmented, partially dormant, but hold strong potential for "legibility." The palace's adaptive reuse as a museum provides a favorable starting point for extending and continuing the narrative established indoors into the outdoor spaces.

In this context, the project aims for a spatial scenario where the on-site experience of historical accumulation and contemporary cultural production can converge along the same spine. The proposed Archaeo-park and Cultural Center should offer a flexible framework comprising, on one hand, open spaces where archaeological traces are interpreted through landscape and architectural means, and on the other hand, public/cultural programs (auditoriums, a multipurpose black box, workshop-studios, a small interpretation-research library, etc.). "Slow circulation" routes, observation platforms, and thresholds created along the walls will facilitate the reading of historical layers and generate new public stops that interface with the daily life of Ayvansaray.

At the core of the project will be the balance between conservation and use, reversible interventions, and universal design principles. The design research is not limited to the marked project boundary; it is possible to develop proposals that extend beyond the core area defined in the site plan and establish urban relationships with the Golden Horn coast, the inner streets of Ayvansaray, and the transitions inside and outside the walls. Students will be encouraged to consider the voids and transitional areas beyond the boundary as "public joints" and to weave an accessible and inclusive network at the neighborhood scale. Thus, the project should aim to create an urban fragment that extends the museum's existing narrative into the open air, is open to the participation of local communities, and functions as a place of learning and production.

In conclusion, this diploma project seeks to redesign the Tekfur Palace and its environs through the lens of "legible layers," aiming to create a vibrant threshold space where archaeological heritage is made visible with a respectful language and contemporary cultural production establishes new relationships. Towards this goal, the terracing of the topography, wind-sun relationships, pedestrian continuity, and wayfinding systems will be paired with the site plan provided below and transformed into fundamental components of the design concept.

ARCHITECTURAL PROGRAM

A. VISITOR WELCOME AND NARRATIVE AREAS (Total: $\approx 1,200 \text{ m}^2$)

This zone manages the transition between the existing Tekfur Palace Museum and the new structure and introduces the project's narrative.

1. Entrance Hall - Information Point (250 m^2): A transparent, inviting entrance. Housing ticket counters, information desk, cloakroom, and a preparation area for the exhibition space.
2. Continuity Gallery / Context Exhibition (400 m^2): An abstract exhibition space narrating the history of Tekfur Palace, the Blakhernai Palace, and the land walls through archaeological finds, digital installations, and maps. Introduces visitors to the idea of "legible layers."
3. Temporary / Periodic Exhibition Hall (550 m^2): A modular area with sufficient ceiling height, flexible lighting, and wall systems, capable of hosting exhibitions on archaeology, contemporary art, and history.

B. ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION AND RESEARCH AREAS (Total: $\approx 1,500 \text{ m}^2$)

Forms the academic and "legibility" backbone of the project.

1. Research Library & Reading Room (300 m^2): A specialized collection focusing on the Late Byzantine Period, Istanbul archaeology, architectural history, and conservation. Includes quiet study areas and digital archive access points.
2. Conservation Laboratory (Visible) (250 m^2): Designed as a "live laboratory" open to visitors via glass walls. The area where archaeological finds are cleaned, documented, and conserved. An element for education and curiosity.
3. Archaeology Institute Offices & Study Rooms (350 m^2): Offices and collaborative workspaces for archaeologists, academics, and master's/PhD students working on-site.
4. Archaeology Storage Depot (600 m^2): A storage area with high shelving systems and climate control, not directly accessible to visitors but viewable through guided tours or specific research studies.

C. CULTURAL PRODUCTION AND LEARNING AREAS (Total: $\approx 1,600 \text{ m}^2$)

Operationalizes the scenario of "nourishing contemporary culture and art production."

1. Multipurpose Hall (Black Box) (400 m^2): A 200-person capacity, sound-insulated hall that can be completely darkened, with a flexible stage setup. For conferences, film screenings, performances, and seminars.
2. Workshops and Studios (600 m^2):
 - * 2x Adult/Mixed-Technique Workshops ($150 \text{ m}^2 \times 2 = 300 \text{ m}^2$): Workshops for traditional crafts like ceramics, mosaic, stoneworking.
 - * Children's Education Workshop (150 m^2): Interactive archaeology and history workshops for school groups and families.
 - * Digital Production & Media Studio (150 m^2): For 3D modeling, AR/VR applications.
3. Virtual Reality (VR) Experience Room (100 m^2): A high-tech experience area that takes visitors on a virtual journey to Istanbul in the Late Byzantine Period.
4. Seminar & Meeting Rooms (500 m^2): 4-5 multipurpose rooms with natural lighting, with capacities for 20, 40, and 60 people, which can be interconnected.

D. PUBLIC AND SOCIAL AREAS (Total: $\approx 1,650 \text{ m}^2$)

Spaces that are "open to the participation of local communities" and "in contact with daily life."

1. Cafe / Restaurant (500 m^2): A social gathering point for both visitors and local residents, opening onto an inner courtyard or terrace overlooking the city walls and the Golden Horn.
2. Museum Shop (250 m^2): A shop offering a wide range of products, from traditional crafts and reproduction artifacts to academic publications and souvenirs.
3. Exhibition Courtyard / Foyer (400 m^2): A semi-enclosed circulation and rest area surrounding the multipurpose hall and exhibition spaces, usable for sculptures, installations, or open-air exhibitions.
4. Flexible Community Center (500 m^2): A unit with an independent entrance, open for use by local residents, for organizing exhibitions, meetings, small-scale workshops, or social events.

E. CIRCULATION AND TECHNICAL AREAS (Total: $\approx 1,000 \text{ m}^2$)

1. Vertical & Horizontal Circulation (700 m^2): Corridors, stairwells, elevator shafts, waiting areas. Planned to be fully accessible according to "universal design principles."
2. Technical Rooms (300 m^2): Essential service areas such as electrical, mechanical, IT rooms, waste collection areas, cleaning storage. Service elevators for large exhibition items must be considered to connect exhibition areas and storage.

F. PARKING AND SERVICE AREAS (Total: $\approx 3,000 \text{ m}^2$)

1. Indoor parking for 100 vehicles (1500 m^2),
2. Shelter for 200 people (200 m^2),
3. Service areas (1300 m^2). Attention must be paid to the requirements for mechanical and HVAC equipment, necessary heights, and turning radii.

OPEN SPACE PROGRAM

Proposals for open areas outside the enclosed building footprint that will form an integral part of the design:

- * Archaeo-Park Walking Routes: "Slow circulation" paths along the walls, equipped with information panels interpreting archaeological remains.
- * Observation Platforms & Thresholds: Platforms placed at strategic points for reading historical layers and viewing the landscape.
- * Open-Air Exhibition & Event Area: A flexible performance area for concerts, theater, and temporary exhibitions.
- * Experimental Archaeology Garden: A living exhibition area displaying historical agriculture and vegetation.
- * Public Spaces Connecting with the Neighborhood: Accessible pedestrian connections integrating the areas inside and outside the city walls, programmed with public functions.

**Fire and Earthquake
Safety**

The design of the project will adhere to the most current fire and earthquake regulations, considering Istanbul's seismic risk and its adjacency to the historic fabric. The structural system will be carefully designed, addressing rigidity, ductility, and expansion joints. Fire compartments, smoke extraction systems, and fire-resistant escape routes will be integrated with open areas. To facilitate access and movement for emergency response teams, fire water reservoirs and hydrants will be proposed at strategic points.

Location / Workspace

Urban-Scale



Site Plan



Assessment Components	
MIDTERM GRADE (Semester/in-the-semester evaluation): <u>The total score obtained with the contribution of the following components at the specified rates is the MIDTERM EXAM GRADE</u> <i>Q&A + Jury 1 + Seminar Studies + Jury 2 (Midterm Jury)</i> Intermediate Meeting: Participation optional 0%	%40
FINAL EXAM GRADE (Semester/final exam grade): <u>The total score obtained with the contribution of the following components at the specified rates is the FINAL EXAM</u> <i>Jury 3 + Sketch Exam + Final Jury</i> <i>(It is mandatory to get at least 50 (fifty points) from the Final Jury in order to pass the course)</i>	%60
FINAL GRADE= MIDTERM EXAM GRADE (Semester/in-year evaluation) 40% + FINAL EXAM GRADE (Semester/final-exam-grade) 60% = FINAL (SUCCESS) GRADE 100%	%100

COURSE SCHEDULE			
WEEK	DATE	TOPIC	LOCATION
THE START OF THE ACADEMIC TERM			
WEEK 1	23.09.2025 ⁽¹⁾	Announcement of the 2025-2026 Fall Diploma Project Topic and Schedule	Web Site: http://mimarlik.mtf.marmara.edu.tr/
	23.09.2025 ⁽²⁾		
WEEK 2	30.09.2025 ⁽¹⁾	Site Visit ^(10:00)	Tekfur Sarayı Museum
	30.09.2025 ⁽²⁾	Question-Answer ^{1 (14:00)}	
WEEK 3	07.10.2025 ⁽¹⁾	Intermediate Meeting ^{5(10:00)}	Online
	07.10.2025 ⁽²⁾		
WEEK 4	14.10.2025 ⁽¹⁾	Seminar ³ (Students' competition project seminar (9.30-12.30)	7204
	14.10.2025 ⁽²⁾	Seminar ³ (Students' competition project seminar (13.30-16.30)	7204
WEEK 5	21.10.2025 ⁽¹⁾	Jury 1 ⁴	7204
	21.10.2025 ⁽²⁾	(All Day)	
WEEK 6	28.10.2025 ⁽¹⁾		
	28.10.2025 ⁽²⁾		
WEEK 7	04.11.2025 ⁽¹⁾	Intermediate Meeting ^{5(10:00)}	Online
	04.11.2025 ⁽²⁾		
WEEK 8	10.11.2025 ⁽¹⁾	MIDTERM WEEK	
	16.11.2025 ⁽²⁾		
	11.11.2025	Jury 2 ⁶ (11.11.2025 All day)	7204
WEEK 9	18.11.2025 ⁽¹⁾		
	18.11.2025 ⁽²⁾		
WEEK 10	25.11.2025 ⁽¹⁾		
	25.11.2025 ⁽²⁾		
WEEK 11	02.12.2025 ⁽¹⁾		
	02.12.2025 ⁽²⁾		
WEEK 12	09.12.2025 ⁽¹⁾	Jury 3 ⁷	7204
	09.12.2025 ⁽²⁾	(All day)	
WEEK 13	16.12.2025 ⁽¹⁾	Intermediate Meeting ^{8(10:00)}	Online
	16.12.2025 ⁽²⁾		
WEEK 14	23.12.2025 ⁽¹⁾		
	23.12.2025 ⁽²⁾		
WEEK 15	30.12.2025 ⁽¹⁾	Sketch Exam ⁹	7204
	30.12.2025 ⁽²⁾	(All Day)	
	12.01.2026	FINAL WEEK	
	25.01.2026		
	13.01. 2026	FINAL JURY ¹⁰ 13.01.2026 All day)	7204

ECTS / WORKING HOUR TABLE			
Activities	Number of Weeks	Duration (Hour)	Working Hours
Duration of Course (Including Exams: 15 x Total Weekly Course Hour):	15	8	120
Extracurricular Working Hour (Seminar Attendance, Preparatory Work, Review Assignments, Internet Studies, etc.)	15	8	120
Submissions	12	4	48
Midterm	2	12	24
Final exam	2	24	48
Working Hours in Total			360
Working Hours in Total / 30			360 / 30
ECTS			12

Submission Procedure for All Juries

Jury 1 and Jury 3

- Unless otherwise announced, the jury start time is 13.30. The submission/digital upload time is between 09.30-10.30 the jury day. All documents/sheets must also be 'fitted' in a file in A3 format and uploaded separately as a '.pdf' file as a copy. Presentations will be made with digital materials. Students who have an official excuse/report must submit their submissions within two days following the end of the report. For this reason, students with an official excuse/report should contact the research assistants as soon as they receive a report. This situation does not apply to midterm and final submissions, the regulations throughout the University are complied with.
- All students must present their projects orally and explain the questions of the jury
- **Late submissions will not be accepted.**

Jury 2 (Midterm), Final Jury

- Unless otherwise announced, the jury start time is 09.30. The submission/digital upload time is between 08.15-09.15 the jury day. All documents/sheets must also be 'fitted' in a file in A3 format and uploaded separately as a '.pdf' file as a copy.
- All original size documents/sheets must be A1 and portrait, suitable for hanging/viewing. All documents/sheets must match the pads provided. (Subtitles: https://1drv.ms/u/s!Alqna9lDdqldkK44eM_zuqLf_7asBA?e=uXDD1e)
- Students who have an official excuse/report must submit their submissions within two days following the end of the report. For this reason, students with an official excuse/report should contact the research assistants as soon as they receive a report. This situation does not apply to midterm and final submissions, the regulations throughout the University are complied with.
- All students must present their projects orally and explain the questions of the jury
- **Late submissions will not be accepted.**

EXPLANATIONS

1 Seminars

We will meet at the project site in Kadıköy and a site visit will be held. Afterwards, a seminar on the project area will be held at Design Workshop Kadıköy (TAK).

2 Q&A

After the announcement of the diploma project and the calendar on the website, questions must be sent to the Jury in WRITTEN form via E-MAIL until 17:00 on 26.09.2023.

On the day of the meeting, the jury will answer the questions based on these e-mails. Spontaneous discussions and questions will also be possible during the meeting.

All questions must be sent in the written form to the e-mail address below. Apart from this, questions / messages sent to personal e-mail addresses of the jury members or other accounts will be deemed invalid.

marun.diploma@gmail.com

3 Seminars

The online seminar on the project topic will be organised. After the seminar, a short study will be carried out and the products will be submitted.

4 Jury 1

- 1/5000, 1/2000, 1/1000 contextual/urban readings and diagrams (Current situation, close environment relations, social and cultural character of the region, microclimate, urban transportation relations, public spaces, urban and natural landscape elements and problems of the area. – studies examining their potential)
- Studies on how it is a Performing Arts and Transportation Urban Platform, concept presentation of the detailed program, presentation of the design approach with diagrams. Draft ideas for 1/2000, 1/1000 proposal design (program development, case study, context-design relations, presentation of proposals, etc.)
- Physical model (1/1000 and/or 1/500; it is recommended to make models in more than one scale, working with the area and its close surroundings, neighbouring buildings, roads, topography.)
- Additional studies (3D model, research, etc.)

The analyses are expected to be of high quality, i.e. researched, interpreted and individualised by the student, and at the same time to be of a depth that includes the search for first thoughts on architectural design.

5 ve 8 Intermediate Meeting

Students will meet online with the faculty members of the Department of Architecture. Meetings will be recorded to be shared with other Jury members if necessary. It is an environment where students can discuss the subjects they want to consult, and evaluations/seminars will be held in areas of expertise such as study area, conservation, structure, urban design/landscape. It is not a part of the jury.

It is not a project revision or part of the jury.

6 Jury 2 (Midterm Jury)

- Contextual/Urban readings and diagrams (The current situation, **inner circle** relations, the social and cultural character of the region, microclimate, urban transport relations, public spaces, urban and natural landscape elements and studies examining the problems and potentials of the field) Might be in 1/5000, 1/2000, 1/1000 scales.
- Studies on how it is a Performing Arts and Transportation Urban Platform; studies on how the time factor is reflected in the concept, the connection of performing arts with transfer coordination, concept presentation of the detailed programme, transfer of the design approach with diagrams
- A Productions explaining the relationship between analysis and idea, studies and drawings explaining the evolution of field studies into concept ideas.
- Description of the program/ reasoned introduction (functions, dimensions, capacities, etc.)
- 1/5000, 1/2000, 1/1000 analyses, environmental relations, the decision on the access/approach to the project area that is, the site plan and the inner circle decisions
- 1/2000, 1/1000 Site plan and silhouettes with urban decisions (public spaces, accessibility for pedestrians/vehicles, transport, density, should include the proposed relationships between the urban context and the project area through the publicity)
- 1/1000, 1/500 urban silhouettes and site sections (Urban silhouettes, should include landscape and architectural design decisions, spatial suggestions)
- Physical model (1/1000 and/or 1/500; it is recommended to make models in more than one scale, working with the area and its close surroundings, neighbouring buildings, roads, topography.)
- 1/500 site plan (must include architectural and landscape decisions related to the immediate environment and land access decisions)
- 1/500 sections, elevations, silhouettes (all surrounding structures/urban texture/environment should be included)
- 1/200 ground floor plan
- Ideas, drawings, 3D models, perspectives explaining the architectural design idea.

7 Jury 3

- 1/5000, 1/2000 works explaining the interrelation between analyses and architectural design idea
 - Decided architectural program (functions, capacities, areas, etc)
 - 1/1000 site plan decisions (including the things below)
 - Ground floor plan,
 - Access to the building(s)/building masses (pedestrian, vehicle, service connections, disabled etc.),
 - Urban landscape design decisions
 - The linkages and connections between the masses
 - Links to nearby landmarks
 - 1/1000 silhouettes and sections cutting the site (at least two sections and silhouettes)
 - Physical model (1/1000 and/or 1/500; it is recommended to make models in more than one scale, working with the area and its close surroundings, neighbouring buildings, roads, topography.)
 - 1/500 (in a way that explains the immediate environment and all connections) ground level plan
 - 1/500 (in a way that explains the immediate environment and all connections) 2 sections
 - 1/500 (in a way that explains the immediate environment and all connections) silhouettes and elevations
- Selected from the most narrative part of the project;
- 1/200 ground level plan and all level/floor plans
 - 1/200 sections (as many as needed and all surrounding structures/urban texture/connections should be included)
 - 1/200 elevations (as many as needed and all surrounding structures/urban texture/connections should be included)
- Material predictions, detail investigations, sketches...
 - Ideas, drawings, 3D models, perspectives explaining the architectural design idea.

9 Sketch Exam

The sketch exam will last all day and the subject of the work will be given on the day of the exam or the day before. Submission and exam conditions will be announced. Announcements should be followed.

10 Final Jury

- 1/5000, 1/2000 works explaining the interrelation between analyses and architectural design idea.
- Works explaining architectural program (functions, capacities, areas, etc)

A poster with a 300-word text and drawings explaining the analysis of the project site and the main idea of the architectural design developed accordingly.

- 1/1000 site plan decisions (including the things below)
 - Ground floor plan,
 - Access to the building(s)/building masses (pedestrian, vehicle, service connections, disabled etc.),
 - Urban landscape design decisions
 - The linkages and connections between the masses
 - Links to nearby landmarks
- 1/1000 silhouettes and sections cutting the site (at least two sections and silhouettes)
- Physical model (1/1000 and/or 1/500; it is recommended to make models in more than one scale, working with the area and its close surroundings, neighbouring buildings, roads, topography.)
- 1/500 (in a way that explains the immediate environment and all connections) ground level plan
- 1/500 (in a way that explains the immediate environment and all connections) 2 sections
- 1/500 (in a way that explains the immediate environment and all connections) silhouettes and elevations

Selected from the most narrative part of the project;

- 1/200 ground level plan and all level/floor plans
- 1/200 sections (as many as needed and all surrounding structures/urban texture/connections should be included)
- 1/200 elevations (as many as needed and all surrounding structures/urban texture/connections should be included)
- 1/50 SYSTEM DETAIL Partial plan and section (from foundation to the roof), elevation taken from the ground level which explains architectural design decisions best.

Ideas, drawings, 3D models, perspectives explaining the architectural design idea.

ARCHIVE AND EXHIBITION POSTER

A poster explaining the project in a single sheet (A0, vertical and digital)