MHD

MAINE HOME + DESIGN

2026 AIA MAINE DESIGN AWARDS

EIGHT WINNING PROJECTS AND THE STORIES BEHIND THEM



JUNE 2026

$8.95 US

06

0 09128 03137 8

OLD FARM, NEW FOLKS
A REIMAGINED
PROPERTY IN POWNAL

+

GROW-YOUR-
OWN BOUQUETS

AIA Maine Design Awards

Eight winning projects and the stories behind them

Every spring, the Maine chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA Maine) reveals their selection of standout projects at the annual Design Awards Program. Since the program's inception in 1981, the AIA Design Awards have been celebrating the work of our talented architectural community, highlighting a range of designs that vary in size, scope, purpose, and location. The common thread that connects these eight aesthetically distinct and technically divergent projects is a commitment to elevating living standards and beautifying the built environment.

To winnow down the record-breaking 64 applicant projects, AIA Maine appointed a jury of architectural professionals from Halifax, Nova Scotia. The 2026 jury included Jane Abbott of Abbott Brown Architects, Peter Braithwaite of Peter Braithwaite Studio, Graham Edgar of Wild Salt Architecture, and Susan Fitzgerald of Susan Fitzgerald Architecture. In addition, California-based Gwen Fuertes of Leddy Maytum Stacy Architects served as a technical advisor to the committee.

For the second consecutive year, AIA Maine emphasized submissions within the AIA's Framework for Design Excellence. By answering a series of yes-or-no questions, architects were prompted to reflect on whether their work contributes to an equitable, zero-carbon, resilient, and healthy built environment. Alternatively, prospective winners could upload an Excel-based tool, the Common App for Design Excellence, which focuses on the same core values and progressive goals. Submissions poured in from 37 firms and students, representing both completed works (from accredited architects) and unbuilt projects (submitted by architectural students either studying in Maine or from here). "The unbuilt category is unique because it can push the boundaries a bit," says Kelli Shedd, executive director of AIA Maine. "Impressive is not nearly strong enough a word to describe the caliber of student work being submitted year after year."

According to Shedd, entries this year reflected a rising interest in unique interior materials and a continued focus on prioritizing natural light through sweeping windows and glass features. "We are also seeing quite a bit of elegant and modern construction within the single-family residential subcategory," she says. "I'm particularly excited about the submissions for the renovation and adaptive reuse subcategory this year. These projects are clever in their redesign, from fitting in nearly seamlessly with the existing spaces to highlighting the building's history and original character." (Other subcategories for this year included institutional and commercial, multifamily housing, architrave, small projects, professional unbuilt, and student unbuilt.)

From a fantastical James Bond villain's lair perched on the coast of Maine to a rustic, serene hospitality camp on the Tibetan Plateau, these eight projects reveal the wondrous breadth of imagination of our architectural community. They push the boundaries of what is possible, embrace the history of their profession, and showcase the varied technological achievements of the twenty-first century.

MHD is proud to present the winners of the 2026 AIA Maine Design Awards.



WINNERS AT A GLANCE

Honor Awards

NORDEN CAMP
Blake Civiello Architect
Institutional & Commercial

CHARBROOK FARM
OPAL
Institutional & Commercial

Merit Awards

WANDERWOOD LEAN-TOS
Winkelman Architecture
Small Projects

ELEMENTAL
OPAL
Single-Family Residential

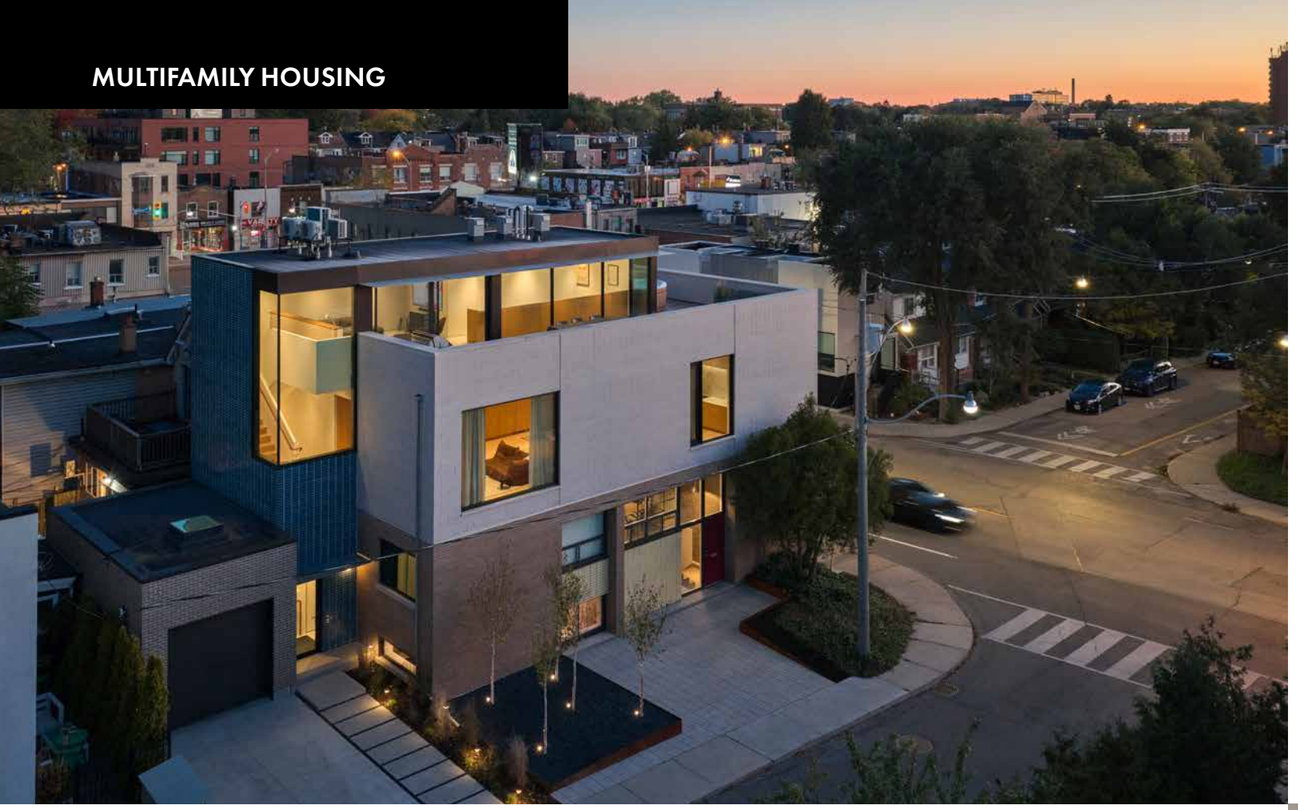
JONES COMMONS
AAmp Studio
Multifamily Housing

Citation Awards

SWEEP SCAPE
Linxi (Jenny) Zhang & Greta Ulatowski
Syracuse University School of Architecture
Student Unbuilt

MUNICIPAL GRAND
AAmp Studio
Institutional & Commercial

SPECTRE HOUSE
Jessie Carroll Architect
Single-Family Residential





Jones Commons, Toronto, Canada

Merit Award for Excellence in Architecture

Architect: AAmp Studio
Project Architect: Anne-Marie Armstrong
Structural Engineer: Moses Structural Engineers
HVAC: Anran Building Services
Plumbing: JIT Professional Services
Landscape Designer: AAmp Studio
Millwork: Wood Studio
General Contractor: AAmp Studio
Photography: Doublespace

From the Jury:

The material use is really strong, especially in the interior. This project is the missing middle housing typology and an example of good, quality living spaces that both look nice and use materials in ways that support the design and quality of life for the occupants. It's like a collage that represents Toronto's current makeup

From the Architect:

Jones Commons transforms a two-story midcentury medical clinic into a mixed-use residential and commercial building in Toronto's Greektown neighborhood. Originally built in the 1950s, the building served generations of residents as a family medical practice before falling into disrepair. In 2020 the project team was commissioned to reimagine the structure through adaptive reuse, embracing "missing middle" housing while preserving the building's cultural presence within the community.

The client's goal was to retain the familiarity of the original building while expanding its usefulness through flexible living and working spaces. The design approach prioritized minimal structural intervention, cost efficiency, and tenant continuity during construction.

A new two-story residential addition bridges above the existing structure, supported by only three interior columns, which allows occupants to remain in place throughout renovation. A new side stair tower provides circulation without altering the original footprint. In contrast, a double-height living space in the new addition introduces daylight and spatial generosity within the family dwelling above.

The completed project accommodates two one-bedroom rental units, a four-bedroom family residence, and a shared commercial studio designed for future residential conversion, supporting long-term adaptability. Restoration of the original yellow glazed brick facade and terrazzo entry preserves the building's recognizable identity, while contemporary brickwork and custom millwork introduce a complementary architectural layer.

Situated between Danforth Avenue's commercial corridor and surrounding residential streets in Toronto, Jones Commons acts as an urban hinge, introducing gentle density without disrupting neighborhood scale. Former patients and neighbors frequently recall visiting the doctors who once practiced here, underscoring the project's enduring social resonance.

Today, Jones Commons operates as a small-scale urban commons, demonstrating how careful adaptive reuse can deliver sustainable growth, economic resilience, and renewed community life.



