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MAINE HOME + DESIGN

2026 AIA MAINE DESIGN AWARDS

EIGHT WINNING PROJECTS AND THE STORIES BEHIND THEM



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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



Municipal Grand, Savannah

Citation Award for Excellence in Architecture

Architect: AAmp Studio
Architect of Record: Lynch Associates Architects
Cofounding Principals: Andrew Ashey, Anne-Marie Armstrong
Project Manager: Charlie Payne
Designers: Alexandra Kiss, Michelle Sterling, Lena Ma, Jasmine Sykes, Theresa Watson, Ron Noble
Structural Engineer: Tharpe Structural Design
Civil Engineer: Coastal Civil Engineer
General Contractor: Choate Construction
Photography: Brooke Holm





From the Jury:

This renovation is well handled, with an incredibly plush interior. The building was able to be reestablished as a landmark; the restraint used is something that should be rewarded. The interiors are thoughtfully redone, reviving the spaces from a former bank to a luxury hotel. The palette and midcentury detailing lend depth to this well-executed project.

From the Architect:

Savannah, Georgia, is celebrated for its antebellum architecture and lush public squares, yet woven into its historic fabric are notable examples of midcentury modernism. Municipal Grand revitalizes a 1961 Federal Savings Bank by Levy and Kiley Architects, transforming it into a 44-key boutique hotel that repositions modernist heritage as a contemporary civic and social asset.

The client sought to transform a long-neglected commercial-turned-municipal building into a welcoming destination for both visitors and locals. Located at a prominent downtown intersection, the hotel functions as a hub for lodging, dining, and social interaction. Achieving this required a careful balance of restoration and reinvention: original terrazzo floors, mosaic tiles, and structural elements were uncovered and preserved, while new interventions—custom walnut and oak millwork, bentwood-inspired seating, and layered thresholds—introduced warmth, tactility, and a contemporary hospitality sensibility.

Historic constraints guided design decisions. The original 21-foot-high lobby volume, cantilevered corner awning, and aluminum curtain wall system were retained. At the same time, guest rooms, bars, lounges, and a rooftop pool were sensitively integrated within the existing structural grid. Reclaimed vault doors, mail chutes, and teller desks were repurposed as interpretive features, embedding the building's layered history into daily use.

Municipal Grand extends the life of its reinforced concrete frame, prioritizing adaptive reuse and minimizing embodied carbon. Public amenities—including the lobby restaurant, basement bar, and rooftop pool—invite community engagement, reactivating the building as a civic anchor and contributing to downtown vitality.

The project exemplifies design that bridges preservation and contemporary function. By honoring the midcentury modernist language while layering in curves, color, and texture, Municipal Grand transforms a once-insular structure into a vibrant, welcoming, and socially engaged destination. It demonstrates how thoughtful adaptive reuse can elevate heritage architecture, support the client's programmatic ambitions, and enrich Savannah's urban fabric.