

MHD

MAINE HOME + DESIGN

JUNE 2025

2025 AIA MAINE DESIGN AWARDS:

19 WINNING PROJECTS THROUGH
THE EYES OF ARCHITECTS

THE MODERN REVIVAL OF
A JOHN CALVIN STEVENS
MASTERPIECE IN PORTLAND



HOW PLUNGE POOLS
BLEND EFFICIENCY
AND WELLNESS

Through These Architects' Eyes

The 2025 AIA Maine Design Awards

Each year, the Maine chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA Maine) shines a spotlight on the best architectural work from our state's design community. From reimagined historical structures to brand-new builds that push the boundaries of sustainable living, the AIA Maine Design Awards program celebrates projects that exemplify thoughtful design, technical rigor, and a commitment to shaping a better built environment.

For the 2025 program, jurors from eastern New York brought their diverse perspectives to the judging table. The Design Awards jury included Beth Lacey of Lacey Architecture, Arien Cartrette of architecture+, Karin Kilgore-Green of JMZ Architects and Planners, and Michael Phinney of Phinney Design Group. For the Architrave Award—created to recognize excellence in traditional design—a separate jury was assembled, including Ira Grandberg of Grandberg and Associates Architects, Michael Tuck of Balzer and Tuck Architecture, and Scott Wallant of Wallant Architecture.

A distinguishing feature of the 2025 awards is the continued emphasis on the AIA's Framework for Design Excellence, a national initiative that calls on architects to lead the way toward a zero-carbon, equitable, resilient, and healthy built environment. This year's applicants were offered two submission paths: answering streamlined yes-or-no questions related to the framework's core principles or submitting the Common App for Design Excellence, a visual and data-driven tool that maps project performance against the framework's ten measures.

"Every year, the AIA Maine Design Awards program celebrates the best work of Maine-based architects. The 2025 program, like those before, is a testament to our architectural community's deep commitment to creating beautiful, thoughtful spaces that honor the people and places they serve. Their work not only elevates the profession and enriches communities but also inspires us all to bring more care and intention to the spaces we occupy," says Jeannette Schram, outgoing executive director of AIA Maine.

While the tools and criteria may evolve, the mission remains constant: to elevate Maine's architectural excellence. The awards program highlights a wide range of work: a currently enrolled architecture student's unbuilt project, a Maine firm's unbuilt project, and commercial, residential, renovation, and adaptive reuse projects designed both in and beyond state lines by AIA Maine members. Whether built or on the boards, honored or not, each submission adds to the broader conversation about what design can—and should—do.

MH+D is proud to present the winners of the 2025 AIA Maine Design Awards.



Photo: Trent Bell

Winners at a Glance

Honor Awards

Ferland Engineering Education & Design Center

The Honeymoon Cottage

The Narrows

East View

Subterranean Car Barn

Merit Awards

Paul J. Schupf Art Center

Sweetwater Residence

Green Haven

The Outpost

Computational Craftsmanship

Citation Awards

The Smith Center for Education & Research

Woodhull Headquarters

Fern House

Notch House

Squid Cove

Tidehead Woods House

West End Garden House

The Architrave Award

Falls Pasture



Fern House, Belgrade Winkelman Architecture

Citation Award for Excellence in Architecture

Founding Principal: Will Winkelman, AIA

Principal Architect: Eric Sokol

Landscape Architect: Richardson & Associates

Structural Engineer: Albert Putnam Associates

General Contractor: LP Homes

Photography: Jeff Roberts

From the Jury:

Fern House is a magical and entirely deferential response to the site—the boulders, the trees, the grass, the topography—effectively creating a sense of exploration in the woods. The scale of the overall mass is reduced by the smaller formal components that mimic the landscape, including the use of the vegetated roof over the kitchen and living room area.

From the Architect:

Among the ferns and trees on this steep site, a young family envisioned making their year-round home a facet of its surroundings: a place that balances warm, comfortable interior spaces with a clear connection to the surrounding landscape and rippling water. The land is strewn with massive boulders, remnants of receding glaciers from thousands of years ago now covered with moss and ferns. Instead of blasting them into pieces and hauling them away, the house was sited to nestle among them and look into and around them. Great care was taken to document the boulders and work the footprint of the house around them, absorbing them in the surroundings.

The primary challenge was how to allow comfortable arrival at the upper level/high side of the home where the bedrooms are, while still maintaining a close connection to the landscape, fern clusters, and path to the lake on the lower level/downhill side. To address this, an “inverted” plan emerged, placing shared spaces on the daylight lower level below the entry.

A tall, light-filled arrival space on the second floor was developed, which leads intuitively down the bright, open stairwell to the shared living spaces on the first floor. Vegetated roofs, planted thick with ferns to blend into the surroundings, cover these lower spaces and are supported by heavy timbers salvaged from an old matchstick factory. To prevent the sunken spaces from feeling dark and underground, the entry hall was stretched taller and constructed as a light well to grab sunlight and pull it into the spaces below.

Large windows on the water side share views of the lake filtered through trees and look over the tops of the “yard” of pine needles and fern-covered boulders in the foreground, deliberately blurring the distinction between inside and outside.