

The AIA Canada Design Awards recognize best practices, innovative thinking, and design excellence in the work of AIA Canada members. This annual program highlights projects that embody innovation, resilience, equity, and beauty, and celebrates architecture that shapes Canada's future.

Schedule

Program Launch	September 1, 2026
Submissions Due	October 31, 2026 – 3:00 PM EST
Awards Announcement	November 25, 2026

Downloads

Entry Form – Part A	Submission & Identification (confidential)
Entry Form – Part B	Project & Media Submission (anonymized, for jury)
AIA Framework for Design Excellence	Reference framework
Award Guidelines (this document)	

Categories

Entries must be submitted in one of the categories listed below. These categories clarify the requirements for each group and help focus the jury on the broad and diverse areas of practice.

Architecture

Eligible entries include new construction, renovation, or preservation/restoration projects completed within the last 5 years. For multi-building projects, the submitting firm must provide detailed evidence of authorship for each portion of the project.

Interior Architecture

Eligible entries include new construction, renovation, or preservation/restoration projects completed within the last 5 years.

Special Projects

Eligible entries follow the criteria of Architecture or Interior Architecture, with a maximum of 5,000 sf and a \$5 million budget.

Urban Design

Eligible entries may include urban design projects, planning programs, civic improvements, campus plans, environmental programs, or redevelopment projects. Projects should not be individual buildings. Incomplete or ongoing programs may be considered if a significant portion has been completed or implemented by a local jurisdiction or authority within the last 5 years.

Community-Engaged Design

Eligible entries must meet the criteria of one of the categories above and demonstrate significant community engagement and collaboration with local social agencies throughout design and construction. Only one project per firm/AIA member may be submitted annually in this category.

Open International

Eligible entries must be located outside of Canada and may include Architecture, Interior Architecture, Urban Design, revitalization, or other types of work. Projects must be built work completed within the last 5 years. For multi-building projects, the submitting firm must provide detailed evidence of authorship.

Unbuilt

Eligible entries include unbuilt projects designed within the last 5 years that will not proceed to construction due to client, land use, or other factors beyond the architect's control. This category is not for projects currently under construction or planned for construction.

Residential

The Residential category recognizes design excellence in architecture created for living, encompassing residential projects across a broad range of housing types, scales, communities, and forms of tenure. Entries are evaluated on responsiveness to the needs and experience of inhabitants, site, and context, in relation to each project's individual program, objectives, and design ambition.

Eligible projects may include new construction, additions, renovations, adaptive reuse, preservation/restoration, or substantial transformations of existing buildings. Mixed-use projects are eligible where housing is a significant component of the project.

Eligibility

- All AIA Canada Society Architect members in good standing may submit projects located anywhere in the world
- AIA International Chapter members may only submit projects within their assigned chapter territory
- The Open International category is available to AIA Canada members for projects located outside Canada
- Built or Unbuilt work must have been completed or designed within the last 5 years (January 1, 2021 – present)
- The submitting AIA Canada member must have been in good standing at the time the design was undertaken
- The submitting member must be the primary author; all significant collaborators must be credited
- Joint ventures or associated architects should submit through one member only, with full credit to all parties
- Projects previously honored by another AIA Region are not eligible
- Projects cannot be submitted simultaneously to more than one AIA Region
- Work by architects or firms serving as jurors in 2026 is ineligible
- AIA Canada Society reserves the right to determine eligibility

Anonymity Requirements

Part B must be fully anonymous.

Do not include firm name, submitter name, client name, or any identifying metadata in Part B.

Part A contains identifying information and is confidential – it is not shared with the jury.

Project authorship remains anonymous throughout jury deliberations. Submissions that reveal authorship in Part B will be disqualified.

Submission Requirements

Each complete submission must include all of the components below.

1 – Entry Forms (Part A & Part B)

Part A – Submission & Identification

Internal use only · Confidential · Not shared with the jury

- Submitter and firm contact information
- AIA member name and number
- Architectural credits for publication
- Client / owner information and authorization
- Copyright declaration and signatures

Part B – Project & Media Submission

Jury review document · Must be fully anonymized

- Project information (category, name, address, type, size, year)
- Project Summary – (max. 700 words)
- Community-Engaged Design Description – if applicable (max. 700 words)
- Project Portfolio, up to 20 pages – (mandatory)
- Image and video file submissions (see Section 2 below)
- No firm names, firm logos, submitter names, or identifying information anywhere in Part B

2 – Image Requirements

A minimum of 3 images is required. Up to 5 images may be submitted, plus a Site or Location Plan. At least one image must be a photograph of the built project (if applicable). Images that do not meet the format, size, or naming requirements may not be displayed. Videos and additional supporting drawings or diagrams are permitted as supplemental materials.

Format	.jpeg only
Dimensions	3200 × 1800 pixels
Resolution	Minimum 72 dpi
File naming	ProjectName_01.jpeg (e.g., GlassPavilion_01.jpeg)
Site / Location Plan	Same format – file name followed by _site
Announcement	Image #1 is used for all announcements and publicity

3 – Project Information and Documents to Be Submitted

Project Summary – Entry Form B	Describe design intent, program, and key design decisions (max. 700 words)
Community-Engaged Design – Entry Form B	If applicable – describe community consultation or engagement (max. 700 words)
Project Portfolio – PDF	Up to 20 pages (e.g., a marketing package). Must be fully anonymized.
Anonymity	Do not include firm name or logo, submitter name, client name, or any identifying information in Part B or the Portfolio

How to Submit

Submit all of the following via the website portal, by October 31, 2026 at 3:00 PM EST:

- Entry Form – Part A (Word)
- Entry Form – Part B (Word, anonymized)
- Project Portfolio PDF (anonymized)
- All image files (.jpeg, named correctly), including Site / Location Plan Drawing

Submissions may be updated until the deadline. Late or incomplete submissions will not be accepted.

Jury and Criteria

- The jury may confer Honour Awards, Merit Awards, and Citations across categories
- The jury will include at least two distinguished architects, with a minimum of one AIA member
- Entries are evaluated based on program and design requirements, integration within context, and alignment with the **AIA Framework for Design Excellence** (projects are not expected to address all measures, but should demonstrate alignment with several)
- Project authorship remains anonymous during jury deliberations

Criteria of Consideration

— Design Quality
— Design Resolution
— Design Advancement
— Social Advancement
— Technical Advancement
— Environmental Advancement
— Preservation / Restoration

Deadlines and Fees

Submission Deadline	October 31, 2026 – 3:00 PM EST
AIA Canada Society Members	\$250 CAD
Non-Members (AIA U.S. or International Chapter)	\$350 CAD (projects must be located in Canada)
Community-Engaged Design	Fee waived
Refunds	All entry fees are final and non-refundable

Prizes & Recognition

— Publication in the AIA Canada Society Journal (Canadian Architect Magazine)
— Feature on the AIA Canada Society website
— Invitation to present at the AIA Canada Society Webinar Series in 2027
— Automatic entry into the 2027 AIA International Awards program at no additional cost (one winning firm)

Contact

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