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CALL FOR ENTRIES



DESIGN 20
AWARDS 26

Shaping Our Communities Through Design Excellence

SUBMISSION DATES

Mar 23 Submission Opens
May 18 Submission Deadline

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Welcome to the AIA Honolulu Design Awards

CALL FOR ENTRIES

Since 1958, the AIA Honolulu Annual Design Awards Program has provided an avenue for AIA Honolulu member architects to be recognized by their peers for their outstanding achievements and dedication to excellence in architectural design.

Extending beyond these exemplary individual recognitions, our prestigious program aims to:

- Utilize the [AIA Framework for Design Excellence](#) as the design standard.
- Elevate the general quality of architectural practice in Hawaii.
- Expand public expectation for design excellence and its breadth/impact on improving daily lives.

ELIGIBILITY

- Licensed Architect members of this Chapter may enter all project categories.
- Associate AIA members of this Chapter may submit in the **Unbuilt** category only.
- No time limit from when the project was completed to when it may be submitted for an award.
- No limit to the number of submissions by the same architect or firm.
- Firms whose employees are members of the jury are not eligible for submission in that year.

The following re-entry rules apply to previously submitted projects:

- Those projects that did not receive any award in a prior year may be resubmitted.
- Previously awarded projects that have undergone substantial renovation may be resubmitted.
- Previously awarded unbuilt projects are eligible for re-submittal upon completion.
- Projects which received past recognition in a non-juried category (i.e. People's Choice winner) may be submitted in subsequent years for consideration of a juried award.
- All other previously awarded juried projects are not eligible for resubmittal.

SUBMISSION FEE \$400 for the First Entry
 \$300 for each Additional Submission

2026 SCHEDULE

- Mon, Mar 23 Call for Entry & Online Submissions Opens
- Mon, May 18 Submissions Due - Must be fully completed/submitted/paid by 5:00 PM
- Fri, July 24 Design Awards Gala at the Hawaii Theater. Winners will be announced.

A \$100 administrative fee will be charged to all withdrawn projects, where AIA has been notified in advance of the request to withdraw. After Tuesday, May 19, 2026, no refund requests from entrants will be considered.

There will be no refunds for submissions that are late, incomplete, or disqualified per the deadlines/guidelines of this awards program.

PROJECT CATEGORIES & AWARDS

Each entry shall be submitted and may receive an award in one of the following categories. The number of projects awarded in each category and the level of award shall be determined by the jury. The jury may unanimously decide to move a project into a more appropriate category post-submission.

PROJECT CATEGORIES

Commercial/Industrial Public and private developments comprising retail, industrial, manufacturing, and hospitality. Commercial renovations, historic preservation, adaptive reuse as well as new construction projects are eligible.

NEW! Centennial Awards (choose this project category for consideration of the Centennial Award) Singles out projects that have stood the test of time for over a quarter-century. To qualify, the project must have been completed at least 25 years ago by an architect who was a former or current member of the AIA Honolulu Chapter or its predecessor organizations.

Distinctive Detail (choose this project category for consideration in our Distinct Detail Design Awards) Individual building components and design features on built projects that deserve special consideration, whether it be a prominent façade, a grand staircase, or a custom piece of furniture.

Institutional Public and private developments of an institutional nature; K-12 and higher education; recreational facilities/parks, hospitals and medical facilities and utilities.

Interior Architecture Examples of projects falling in this category are, but are not limited to, tenant improvements and new tenant spaces within an existing (or by others and/or previously completed) exterior shell/space. Also includes residential interior renovations with minimal exterior improvement.

Residential Single-family residential; multi-family residential; residential housing community planning; and residential renovations, additions, and historic preservation. Residential projects of various sizes and scope are welcome as long as the project involves substantial exterior alterations.

Unbuilt Entries may include any project that is either commissioned or intended for construction, or purely theoretical work not intended for construction, submitted individually, as a team or firm. The jury will award entries in this category based on creativity, originality, power, and potential of the ideas presented.

JURIED AWARDS

Award of Excellence

Requires unanimous vote of the jury that a project excels in all aspects. Reserved for those projects which stand out from all of the meritorious award winners. This highest honor recognizes projects which are deemed to exemplify excellence of architectural design on all levels of analysis and exemplify the highest standards to which AIA members aspire.

Award of Merit

Requires consensus from the jury that a project demonstrates high quality work overall. Granted to projects which display a high standard of architectural quality and design.

Honorable Mention Award

Responds to notable achievements in one or more particular project aspects; area(s) that stood out, as agreed through consensus by the jury.

SPECIALTY AWARDS

Distinctive Detail Award

Celebrates the craftsmanship, attention to detail, and spirit of innovation expressed by architectural elements big and small. Can only be awarded to projects submitted in the Distinctive Detail project category, as agreed through consensus by the jury.

Community Impact Award

Recognizes projects that are designed to remove barriers and burdens, physical or abstract, empowering and enabling people to gather, connect, live, and function to their highest potential, ultimately bringing a community together. This award is unique in that it relies on the experiences of end users; therefore, it is recommended that the project be at least 12 months old at time of submission. Awarded through consensus by the jury.

The Centennial Award – This Year Only & Submission is Free!

Great design only gets better with age. The Centennial Award singles out projects that have stood the test of time for over a quarter-century. To qualify, the project must have been completed at least 25 years ago by an architect who was a former or current member of the AIA Honolulu Chapter or its predecessor organizations. This award is not just about survival; it's about lasting significance. The number of projects awarded shall be determined by the jury.

AIA HONOLULU NON-JURIED AWARD

People's Choice

First launched in 2007, the People's Choice Award provides the public an opportunity to view AIA distinguished entrants and determine an annual winner by popular choice. This award encourages public dialogue to help shape Hawaii through design excellence.

COLLABORATION AWARDS

Hawaii Energy Award for Excellence in Energy Efficient Design

The award recognizes design that embodies Hawai'i Energy's mission to assist Hawai'i's consumers in maximizing energy efficiency as a critical step to getting to our state's clean energy goals, saving ratepayers on their utility costs, and protecting our islands' environment. The winning project will have incorporated energy efficiency as a foundational goal which will provide long-term savings and reduced energy use. The architect of record will be eligible for a \$1,000 bonus incentive. Award recipient will be selected by Hawai'i Energy.

Mayor's Choice

Since 1998 the Mayor's Choice award has validated the importance of good design in shaping our city and local communities. Thanks to the honorable Mayor's Office, City and County of Honolulu, for their continued support. All completed submissions will automatically be entered, and the Mayor will select the winning design.

JUDGING CRITERIA

Each entry will be judged for the success with which the project has met its individual requirements. Entries will be evaluated individually, not in competition with others. The jury uses anonymous written and visual material submitted for their analysis. There will be no site visits, so it is imperative that the information provided describes the project as clearly and accurately as possible.

Jury considerations include how the project aligns with the Framework for Design Excellence, which represents 10 design principles to inform progress towards a zero-carbon, healthy, just, resilient, and equitable built environment.

These 10 principles are:

- Integration: Elevate the project by delivering beauty and function
- Equitable Communities: Positively impacting future occupants
- Ecosystems: Consider the greater environment for opportunities to create harmony
- Water: Conserve and improve water quality as a precious resource
- Economy: Add value for owners, occupants, community, and planet, regardless of size/budget
- Energy: Reduce energy use while improving building performance, function, and comfort
- Well-being: Support health and well-being for all people
- Resources: Make informed material selections and balancing priorities
- Change: Showcase resiliency and adaptability, enhance usability, functionality & value over time
- Discovery: Apply lessons learned from previous projects to refine the design process

In addition, attention will be paid to design quality, aesthetic delight, creativity, craftsmanship, and innovation. Additional criteria may be established by the jury at the time of their review.

Project authorship will remain concealed throughout the deliberations of the jury. If the authorship is revealed on any of the images, plans, captions, or narratives the entry will be disqualified.

2026 JURY Juror selection is based upon locating impartial individuals who represent high levels of achievement, design quality and professional integrity. Every attempt is made to create a balanced panel that will provide fair judgment to all entries.

In 2026, the AIA Honolulu Design Awards jury will consist of five individuals, two of whom will be members of an AIA chapter outside of Hawaii. Three jurors will be Hawaii residents to ensure that the uniqueness of Hawaii Architecture is recognized and appreciated by non-local jurors. Members of the design awards committee whose firms have submitted in that year may not be present and/or may not participate during any aspect of jury deliberations.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Submissions must clearly demonstrate process and accomplishment through a combination of text, diagrams, drawings, photographs, and other graphic materials to address the judging criteria.

TASK LIST

1. Submitter Information/Project Facts: Answer specific questions about yourself and your project. References to firm and individual names will not be visible to the jury during the review process.

2. Common App for Design Excellence:

- **Complete the Excel form fields to the best of your ability.** Each section of the sheet relates to a principle of the [Framework for Design Excellence](#).

3. Context Upload:

****Anonymity is a MUST:** firm and personal names are not to be visible on any pages.

- File name: "Project Name.pdf" (no firm name in title)
- Single PDF file
- 20 pages max, 10 MB max file size
- 8 ½" x 11", Landscape
- Add Project Name in footer
- Limit labels or annotation to approximately 30 words per page.
- These pages should graphically represent the project to the jury and may include:
 - Site and floor plans, diagrams, photographs, sections, elevations or other drawings.
 - Conceptual, sustainable, technical or programmatic diagrams are encouraged.
 - Indicate the project's physical context or site character.
 - Renovations and additions should clearly delineate the scope of work and consider including graphics and/or images that distinguish between the initial circumstances and the final product and contain other material highlighting the reuse or adaptation of the site or building.

4. Publicity Images (4 JPG): Upload 4 images that will be used to showcase the project for publicity purposes (no text included). Requirements: Print-quality (300 dpi) image of approximately 2400 x 4000 pixels in JPG.

DESIGN AWARDS REGISTRATION PROCEDURE

Each project must be individually submitted online. Payment processing is done on a per entry basis. You will create a unique login as a user and can enter multiple submissions within that account. You can edit your submission(s) until the deadline. After Tuesday, May 19, Midnight (HST), no changes can be made.

DISTINCTIVE DETAIL AWARD

“The details are not the details. They make the design.” Charles Eames

The Distinctive Detail Award honors individual building components and design features that may not have been recognized for overall achievement. Whether it be a prominent façade, a grand staircase, or a custom piece of furniture, the Distinctive Detail Award celebrates the craftsmanship, attention to detail, and spirit of innovation expressed by architectural elements big and small.

Eligibility: Same as the AIA Honolulu Design Awards eligibility criteria for Built Projects.

MUST choose “Distinctive Detail” under the Project Category list when you start your submission.

Submission Requirements: Submitted content (narrative, photos, drawings, and other documentation) should focus on the project component intended for consideration and must address the specific judging criteria outlined below. Distinctive Detail applicants will not complete the Common App.

Judging Criteria: Entries will be evaluated individually, not in competition with others.

The jury will be looking for work that sets itself apart from the norm through consideration of the following criteria:

- Overall Concept: How the detail relates to the concept/goals of the overall project.
- Innovation: Originality of the design, technology, material, and/or construction system.
- Materiality: Physical and visual quality.
- Craftmanship: Execution of the design concept.
- Sustainability: Optimizing the relationship with the social, economic, and environmental context.

COMMUNITY IMPACT AWARD

The Community Impact Award recognizes projects that are designed to remove barriers and burdens, physical or abstract, empowering and enabling people and/or communities to gather, connect, live, and function to their highest potential. Design entries in this category need not have a high level of design aesthetic but must demonstrate significant social impact. This award is unique in that it relies on the experiences of end-users; therefore, it is recommended that the project be at least 12 months complete at the time of submission.

Eligibility: ALL AIA Honolulu Design Awards BUILT Projects are eligible.

The AIA Honolulu Design Awards jury will review all entries with strong Common App sections under

- Measure 2: Design for Equitable Communities &
- Measure 7: Design for Well-Being.

This Year Only & Free to Submit!
THE CENTENNIAL AWARD

Great design only gets better with age. The Centennial Award singles out projects that have stood the test of time for over a quarter-century. To qualify, the project must have been completed at least 25 years ago by an architect who was a former or current member of the AIA Honolulu Chapter or its predecessor organizations. This award is not just about survival; it's about lasting significance. The number of projects awarded shall be determined by the jury.

Eligibility: MUST choose “**Centennial Award**” under the **Project Category** list to start your submission.

- Any active AIA Honolulu member—AIA or Assoc. AIA—may nominate a project, individually or as a group. No connection to the project is required.
- The award is open to architectural projects of all classifications and may be one building or a related group of buildings forming a single project.
- Projects may be located in Hawaii or abroad, must have been completed before 2001, and must have been designed by an architect licensed in Hawai'i at the time of completion who was also a current or former member of the AIA Honolulu Chapter or its predecessor organizations.
- The project must be standing in a substantially completed form and in good condition.
- The project should still carry out the original program. Change of use is permitted when it has not basically altered original intent.

Submission Requirements:

1. **Submitter Information/Project Facts:** Answer a few basic questions about yourself and the submitted project. References to firm and individual names will not be visible to the jury.
2. **Nomination Statement** (Max 500 words)
A statement prepared by the sponsoring AIA Honolulu member(s) providing a brief description of the original project; outline the condition of the project at the time of submission, including its current use and general appearance; and summarize any modifications or transformations that have occurred since the project's completion.
3. **Publicity Images**
Images may be used for publicity purposes. Please upload high-resolution JPG's with no text included. If you upload images sourced from the internet, you must ensure they are licensed under "Creative Commons" and permitted for free public use.
 - a. **Upload Images of Original Condition** (1-4 JPG)
Submit a **minimum of one (1)** and up to **four (4)** images, illustrating the project in its original condition. Site plans and floor plans may also be included if available.
 - b. **Upload Images of Current Condition** (1-2 JPG)
Submit a **minimum of one (1)** and up to **two (2)** images, documenting the project in its current condition.

THE HAWAI'I ENERGY AWARD for EXCELLENCE IN ENERGY-EFFICIENT DESIGN

The award recognizes design that embodies Hawai'i Energy's mission to assist Hawai'i's consumers in maximizing energy efficiency as a critical step to getting to our state's clean energy goals, saving ratepayers on their utility costs, and protecting our islands' environment. The winning project will have incorporated energy efficiency as a foundational goal which will provide long-term savings and reduced energy use and illustrate the associated benefits of highly efficient building systems for occupant comfort and well-being and operations and maintenance. The architect of record will be eligible for a \$1,000 bonus incentive in addition to any Hawai'i Energy custom or prescriptive incentives which have already been applied for or received by the utility account holder. For more information on our standard and custom incentives, please visit: <https://hawaiienergy.com/for-businesses/incentives>.

Eligibility: Unbuilt and Built projects in the Institutional or Commercial/Industrial categories that make up the top 15% of total submissions based on gross EUI under Measure 6: Energy on the Common App will be considered.

Hawaii Energy Efficiency Award Jury: The award jury will be separate from our regular jury and consist of energy advisors and engineers from Hawai'i Energy as well as selected experts in energy efficient design.

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