

Matta Sur Complex in Santiago, Chile, Wins Prestigious Design Award from AIA New York State

The 59,000-square-foot multi-use facility, designed by luis vidal + architects, was named a merit winner in the 'Adaptive Reuse and Historic Preservation' category

[luis vidal + architects](#), an international architecture firm that offers responsible and quality designs in response to the urban and social challenges of the day, has been awarded by [the American Institute of Architect New York State \(AIANYS\)](#) a “Merit Award for Renovation and Adaptive Reuse” for its [Matta Sur Community Center + CESFAM](#) project.

The Matta Sur Complex, located in the capital of Chile, consists of two buildings located within the same plot. The former Metropolitan Lyceum of Santiago, built-in 1891, was restored for social uses, such as a nursery school, gym or auditorium. The second component is a new-build construction that accommodates CESFAM, a public primary healthcare center.

“The city that takes good care of its cultural heritage is the city that listens to its past without neglecting its future. Those were our cornerstones for the Matta Sur Complex project,” said Luis Vidal, president and founding partner at luis vidal + architects. “We’re honored to be recognized by such a prominent institute like AIANYS. It’s a true reflection of our constant objective to create high-quality designs with the community in mind.”

luis vidal + architects proposed an extensive renovation plan for the 59,000-square-foot school building. Steps included the replacement of all damaged structural elements, the installation of a new red metal roof, and the implementation of a heating and cooling system. The team also cleaned and painted the concrete facades, replaced floor tiles, and installed new wooden balustrades. The team took great care to preserve distinctive features of the building, such as the open-air corridors that run along the interior elevation overlooking the courtyard.

Additionally, the project included the construction of a central public plaza. Otherwise known as the "heart" of the complex, the extension provides the community with an open space to gather. The complete 59,000-square-foot complex was designed to create a “balance” – what Vidal called a “contemporary, austere language” – between both the historic and new buildings. The space will be utilized by approximately 30,000 users per year.

Through a careful analysis of the preexisting building, combined with a deliberate design, luis vidal + architects worked to reveal the building’s original architectural and aesthetic value. The design also emphasized spatiality, functionality, rhythm and unique use of natural light and façades. Vidal’s work created a “balance” – what he called a “contemporary, austere language” – between both the historic and new buildings.

Annually since 1968, AIANYS’ Annual Design Awards celebrate local, national and international projects that achieve architectural excellence designed by architects licensed in New York State. The program aims to bring exceptional works in the field of architecture well-deserved prestige.

2021 entries were evaluated by nationally recognized peers who, after reviewing and critiquing the entries, select outstanding projects for recognition. The jury had the challenge of choosing the winners out of 222 submissions. Twenty-four projects were recognized.

“Using their leadership, expertise and ability to problem solve, architects continue to create ambitious projects that make a notable difference,” said AIANY President Illya Azaroff, FAIA, said. “I’m proud of the significant contributions and innovative solutions our members provide to both our communities and to the profession.”

The project was developed for Municipality of Santiago, in its commitment to the rescue and validation of abandoned heritage buildings for cultural and neighborhood use.

“The design of Matta Sur supposes the union of the past, present and future in a way that combines modernity and tradition, technology and sustainability through elements such as wood and light,” continued Vidal. “We took advantage of this unique opportunity to create an iconic space in the city where social encounters, clinical care, health education and the promotion of preventative health care merge.”

luis vidal + architects and all award recipients will be honored at a virtual award ceremony on October 27, 2021.

About AIA New York State

AIA New York State is the state component of the American Institute of Architects and is composed of 13 statewide chapters representing over 9,000 architecture professionals. AIA New York is the oldest and largest chapter of the American Institute of Architects with more than 5,500 architect, allied professional, student, and public members. AIANY is dedicated to three goals: design excellence, public outreach and professional development. www.aiany.org