

ALVAR AALTO



Baker House dormitory at the MIT, Cambridge, Boston

Alvar Aalto designed the **Baker House** in 1946 while he was a professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where the dormitory is located. It received its name in 1950, after the MIT's Dean of Students Everett Moore Baker was killed in an airplane crash that year. The building runs along the north side of the Charles River and Aalto's plans maximize the view of the river for every student. The form established a wide variety of room shapes, creating 43 rooms and 22 different room shapes per floor that although similar, still required distinct designs for the placement of built-in furniture. Built with dark red bricks, the modular pieces come together to create sweeping curves that contrast the solid limestone of the rectilinear common room which is a static space in comparison to the movement of the dormitories. The Baker House went through four major renovations since it was completed in 1948, including a replacement of all the windows, making the building wheelchair accessible, a renovation of the mechanical systems, and a restoration of birch furnishings. However, despite these renovations, the attention to detail in the Baker House dormitory brought the essence and formality of Aalto's work into America.

