



UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE  
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Dr Paul Grey  
President, M.I.T.  
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Dear Dr Grey,

I hope you will excuse my writing to you on a matter that is strictly not my concern.

I was privileged on 17 April to visit Massachusetts Institute of Technology and see the Baker House dormitory for the first time. Although I had seen many of Aalto's buildings in Europe this was the first occasion I had visited your country. Knowing the published plans and photographs of the building, I was both saddened by the physical state into which it had fallen and also gratified to discover, in conversation with some of the students, that the intentions of the architect and the quality of the conception are nevertheless appreciated today. I was impressed by the series of client reports that they showed me, and my purpose in writing is simply to add my voice to theirs.

I do not think the architectural importance of your building can be overstated. Aalto is one of the few architects of this century whose reputation has withstood fashionable fluctuations and critical reassessment and emerged not merely unscathed but enhanced, so that his work has an historic importance. I am well aware of the financial burden that the care of buildings of this rare quality places on institutions with limited funds but I do believe that future generations would not forgive us if we were to allow Baker house to slip into a cycle of progressive physical deterioration, and not begin both to undo some of the damage wrought in previous decades (such as the partitioning of lounge areas to create extra rooms) and to restore the servicing systems and the fabric of the building to a state that is worthy of its intrinsic architectural quality.

Yours sincerely,

*Nicholas Ray*

Nicholas Ray  
Lecturer in Architecture

cc: Chairman, Client Team.