



First look

## First Pocket Living development in Southwark completed by Maccreanor Lavington

17 July, 2020 By [Rob Wilson](#)

The Varcoe Road development, which consists of 57 one-bedroom flats, has over 400m<sup>2</sup> of communal space including a co-working space, sun-room and terraces

The seven-storey building is sited in the Old Kent Road Area Action Plan and Opportunity Area and is the first Pocket Living scheme in Southwark. The development's brick façade is designed to echo the robust ex-industrial character of the neighbourhood.

To encourage a strong sense of community amongst residents, amenity space has been incorporated throughout the design despite a limited footprint. Thus every flat has its own private projecting balcony or terrace, while over 400m<sup>2</sup> of communal space is distributed throughout the building, allowing residents to socialise outside their apartments.



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*Source: Jack Hobhouse*

[zoom in](#) [zoom out](#)

An entrance lobby with an open stair leads to a communal terrace on the first floor. On the floor above a double height co-working space provides facilities for residents to work outside their flats. Above this a double height sunroom offers a shared living room. Large high-level windows and glazed screens in both these spaces are designed to bring daylight into the adjacent corridors, and visually create a sense of community. Above this a pair of large landscaped roof terraces are located on the sixth and seventh floors.



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Source: Jack Hobhouse

[zoom in](#) [zoom out](#)

**Architects view**

The brick architecture is articulated into two volumes of differing heights defining a rhythm of a series of buildings along the street. Both volumes have generous fenestration in the form of full height windows and Juliet balconies to both living room and bedroom. The northern eight-storey section of the main elevation is given a vertical emphasis through stepped brickwork piers and architectural precast concrete banding at every other floor. Precast banding at every floor and expressed brick bands give the southern six-storey section a horizontal emphasis. The building is the first to be completed in an area undergoing rapid change, and has set an important benchmark for quality for forthcoming neighbouring schemes.

The building was designed to achieve a BREEAM Excellent rating. The residential element was designed to achieve a reduction in carbon emissions compared to the Building Regulations Part L notional building. The commercial element of the project was designed to facilitate future adaptation, thereby prolonging its lifespan.

Passive design principles were followed when developing the building from. The block has a simple rectangular footprint which minimize external surface area. The flats are stacked and organized around a north south corridor which makes the building very efficient. Window sizes and positions were carefully considered with respect to U value, ADF and solar gain. None of the apartments or communal areas rely on mechanical cooling.

*Gavin Finnan, associate director, Maccreanor Lavington*



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*Source: Jack Hobhouse*

[zoom in](#)[zoom out](#)

### **Client's view**

As Pocket Living's first development in Southwark, it was a priority for Varcoe Road SE16 to be an exemplar project for the borough. The site, a former garage at just 0.2 acres, was particularly challenging and required careful and ambitious design. The area is one of change, as part of the Old Kent Road Opportunity Area, so the design needed to reflect this; respecting the past while looking to the future. Through careful design 57 affordable homes have been delivered on this challenging small site which is one of the first developments to be completed in the Opportunity Area.

Pocket Living delivers high quality, compact discounted affordable homes for first time buyers. A key part of our ethos is to encourage a strong sense of community. Maccreanor Lavington's design embraced this to create an attractive and welcoming environment with shared amenity spaces to encourage social interactions with carefully designed homes that maximise space, air and light and reduce costs for first time buyers.

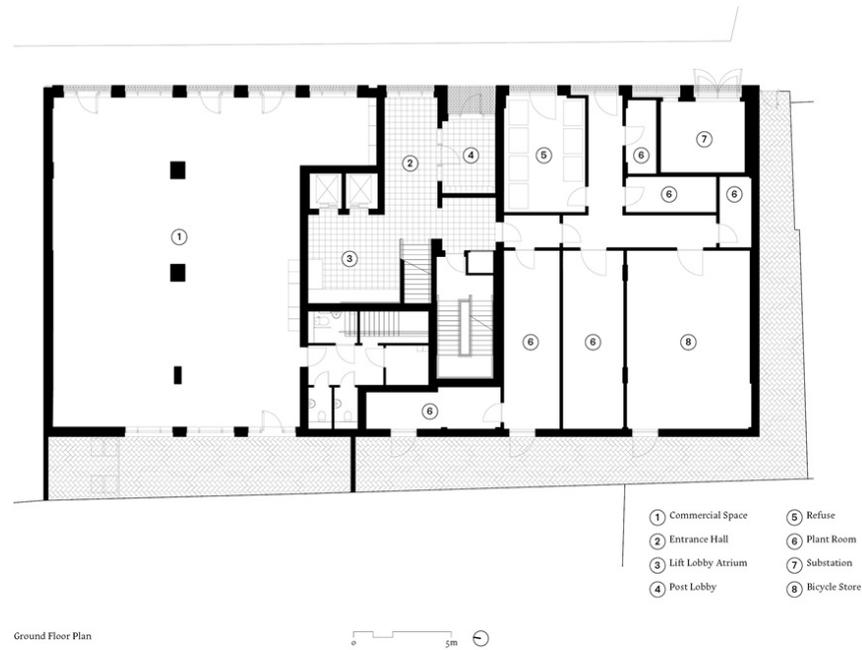
Maccreanor Lavington has designed a range of shared spaces to meet residents' needs and they are being well-used and appreciated by residents. Residents are greeted by a double-height entrance lobby which opens out onto a feature staircase. On level two is the co-working room, which features floor-to-ceiling timber glazing and joinery desks for residents to be able to work in a quiet environment. On level four, the green sunroom faces south-west; the tall space has bespoke furniture and shelving for residents to meet, play board games or relax and read. Every corridor is naturally lit. Three landscaped terraces give residents panoramic views around London with built-in benches and planters.

We welcome the passion and commitment Maccreanor Lavington has shown in this project, fulfilling the brief and aligning with our values to deliver quality homes for first time buyers in Southwark. They have succeeded in creating a design that navigates the complexities of a small site and creates an attractive environment which has allowed residents to build a connected and lively community.

*Pocket Living*

MACCREANOR  
LAVINGTON

Varcoe Road



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First look material\drawings\02 ground floor plan

Source: *Maccreanor Lavington*

Ground floor plan

[zoom in](#) [zoom out](#)

**Project Data**

**Start on site** August 2018

**Completion date** January 2020

**Gross internal floor area** 3,640 m<sup>2</sup>

**Form of contract or procurement route** Design & Build

**Construction cost** £9.6m

**Construction cost per m<sup>2</sup>** £2,368

**Architect** Maccreanor Lavington

**Client** Pocket Living

**Structural engineer** Parmerbrook

**M&E consultant** XC02

**QS** Tower Eight

**Landscape consultant** ACD

**Acoustic consultant** KP Acoustics

**Main contractor** HG Construction

**Planning consultant** Rolfe Judd

**Ecology consultant** RPS

**Transport consultant** TPP

**Annual CO<sub>2</sub> emissions** 16 KgCO<sub>2</sub>eq/m<sup>2</sup>

**On-site energy generation** 13.9 kWh/yr

**CAD software used** AutoCad