

## **'I visited Croydon's new pocket homes no wider than a London Underground train but felt like I was in Doctor Who's Tardis'**

Everyone knows about the housing situation in London and the fact it feels like there's a lack of space for an ever-growing population. A look at property sites will show you the astronomical prices people have to fork out to call London home, as well as some properties thinking a toilet next to your bed is an ideal way of living - housing in London is a stressful situation.

A concern for me however though with housing, in general, is the low ceilings. I'm 6'5 so I have a habit of sub-consciously ducking my head whenever I walk into a house. An annoying habit that you may think is me simply moaning but if I don't do it, I would be giving myself multiple concussions.

When I found out about Croydon's newest development from Pocket Living, something stood out to me. At 38sqm and roughly 3.5metres wide (roughly the same as an Underground train), this sounded like an absolutely tiny flat.

Pocket Living describes these as Pocket Homes, homes designed to maximise space and only for first-time buyers. These are definitely issues affecting Londoners who may feel that they are being priced out from the area and could be a way for them to stay within the city they love. I felt obliged to visit.

As I walked up to the new development on Addiscombe Grove, East Croydon, I was instantly impressed by the exterior of the property. Standing tall in the skyline (the building, not me), I looked up at the 21-storey high building wondering what lay inside these walls.

Walking into the property you are greeted by communal spaces on both sides, something Jenny Anson, Head of Sales at Pocket Living, says they wanted to pay close attention to. With community spirit at the forefront, chatting to your neighbours and fostering harmony, Pocket wants residents to be able to interact and get on with each other. Optimistic thoughts in London I would imagine.

Jenny showed me to one of the homes and as I walked through the lobby, this felt more like a hotel than a selection of homes to me. Wide hallways and identical doors, it felt like I was going to treat myself to a luxurious experience. As I walked through the doors, I found myself not needing to duck my head.

What was this new feeling? I thought I got lucky so I walked in and out a few times just to confirm and amazingly, these were tall doorways.

Walking into the kitchen I was greeted by a burst of natural light, something that should be a given but is also becoming rarer with a lot of developments. The home

had two large windows in the front room which helped to light up the interior giving it a very homely feel.

I was instantly amazed at how spacious the home felt. The open-plan living area meant the kitchen was joined to the front room while also maximising the space.

The kitchen was big enough for me to bend over and open up multiple cupboard doors as well as the fact I wasn't even close to the ceiling. How this place was only 38sqm amazed me as in my head, I imagined it wouldn't be bigger than a Tube carriage and I couldn't have been more wrong.

The home is big enough for one person but could definitely fit a couple in and if you are an average-sized person, you might even be able to get a pet in.

The bedroom is big enough to fit a double bed with two bedside tables on either side. If you're feeling fancier, you can even get a king-size bed and sacrifice a bedside table. Again, I didn't need to duck on my entry into the room so this was a major selling point.

Another large window graces the room providing wonderful light and a nice wake-up call if your alarm fails you.

The bathroom consists of a shower, sink and toilet, and it doesn't feel too cramped whatsoever.

The horror images of a fridge right next to a toilet live long in my memory but thankfully at a Pocket Home, you shouldn't encounter a sight like that. I was able to stand in the shower and felt like I wouldn't break anything with my size so that was a big plus. It simply had everything.

Another problem some have faced with living in London is the lack of open spaces attached to their property. Pocket Living doesn't have that problem. Located on the 9th, 20th and 21st floors are terrace spaces that give residents different viewpoints of the London skyline and an opportunity to relax or bask in the sun.

On the 20th and 21st floors, you can see the city and Canary Wharf on one side, Crystal Palace in the distance and the greenery of Surrey on the other. The contrast is a beautiful touch and having that option certainly makes living here a bit more appealing.

Overall, the home is separated into three-different rooms but utilises the space well. My only concern was the fact my phone signal was pretty much non-existent but Jenny mentioned that it could be an issue with new build developments in their initial phases.

Prices on the homes start from £260,000 and are exclusively for first-time buyers who live and work in the borough. They are also at a 20 per cent discount on the local market rate as well as providing owners with 100 per cent ownership.

I am someone who has always believed the saying 'nothing good happens south of the river', but Pocket Homes may have made a believer out of me.