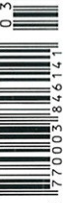


# POCKET HOUSING

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# BUILDINGS

## ONLINE PAGE 29

Interview With Pocket founder Marc Vlessing  
Survey Take the AJ Housing questionnaire

Could Patel Taylor's almshouse-inspired homes for over-65s in east London keen to downsize help to free up social housing?  
asks Owen Pritchard

ALL IMAGES COURTESY OF THE ARCHITECTS/POCKET

# POCKET HOMES

Five practices have won an invited competition to design compact and affordable two-bedroom flats in London for developer Pocket

**MORE HOMES BETTER HOMES**

By Merlin Fulcher

The AJ can exclusively reveal the winners of Pocket's invited contest for a new generation of compact and affordable two-bedroom apartments in London.

David Kohn Architects, HAT Projects, Mikhail Riches Architects, Henley Halebrown Rorrison and Weston Williamson + Partners have all been commended and earmarked for future projects by the property developer.

Nineteen architects were invited to design innovative 'two-bedroom/two-person' units for Londoners priced out of the open market but unable to qualify for social housing.

Pocket hopes the competition will lead to a new category within the Greater London Authority's space standards, which currently only recommend 'two-bedroom/three-person' units measuring 61m<sup>2</sup>.

The contest's winning designs are smaller, ranging from 51m<sup>2</sup> (Henley Halebrown Rorrison) to 58m<sup>2</sup> (David Kohn).

The ambitious move comes four years after Pocket successfully lobbied for the mayor's guidelines to include one bedroom 'micro' apartments measuring 37m<sup>2</sup>. It now sells these at a 20 per cent discount of market rates.

The company's co-founder and chief executive Marc Vlessing said: 'This competition marks the beginning of plans to extend our model of affordable housing to families and joint buyers who would otherwise be priced off the housing ladder.'

**HALL HOME**

**58m<sup>2</sup>**

**DAVID KOHN ARCHITECTS**

**Project synopsis**

Hall Home takes inspiration from vernacular English hall houses. These had one large space for cooking, eating, meeting and playing, and small, adjacent cellular spaces for sleeping and storing household effects. The Hall Home plan has been arranged to maximise the size of a central space, giving the apartment a sense of generosity. This responds to the brief in offering a robust flexibility catering to different households and ownership models.

**Judges' comments**

'Hall Home is an accomplished piece of design that employs the simple mechanism of increased head height to liberate the plan. A series of elegantly planned and multifunctional rooms combine to provide a compelling, civilised, and beautiful home.'



- KEY
- A. Living room
- B. Adult bedroom
- C. Bathroom
- D. Child bedroom
- E. Nursery/playroom
- F. Flexible guest room



# THE POCKET LOFT

57m<sup>2</sup>

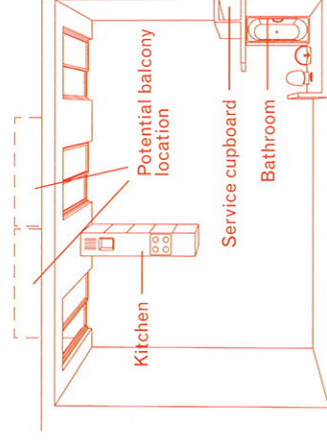
HAT PROJECTS

- KEY  
A. Kitchen/living/dining  
B. Bedroom  
C. Bathroom  
D. Balcony

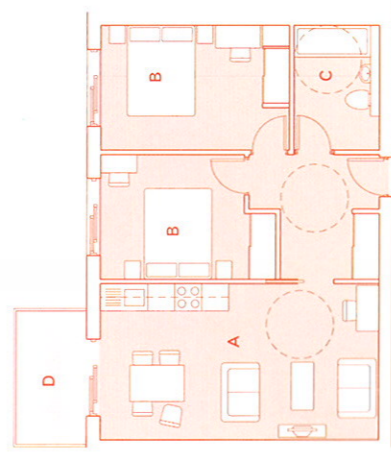
**Project synopsis**  
The Pocket Loft works within an efficient structural and servicing grid, behind a simple, well-proportioned facade. The shell unit can accommodate several Lifetime Homes-compliant, two-bedroom flat layouts, for purchase fully fitted out. Like a classic loft building, a range of other layout options could be offered off-plan, or units could be sold as shell-and-core only at reduced cost, allowing purchasers to reflect their lifestyle needs in their apartment layouts.

**Judges' comments**

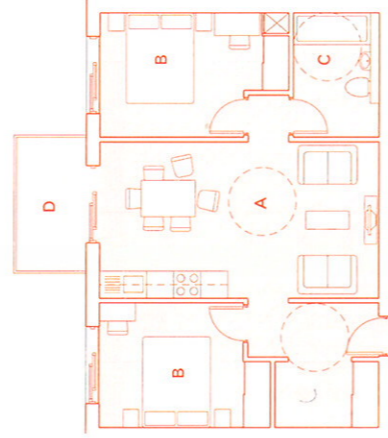
'The concept provides a provocative model for an inherently flexible shell-and-core volume that can be fitted out to suit the bespoke reality of contemporary life. The homes would suit the residents both initially and as their lifestyle (and family size) evolves.'



Shell core before configuration



Layout 1 – Bedroom and bathroom clustered together



Layout 2 – Double bedrooms either side of the shared open-plan living space



# POCKET NO 2

54m<sup>2</sup>

MIKHAIL RICHES ARCHITECTS

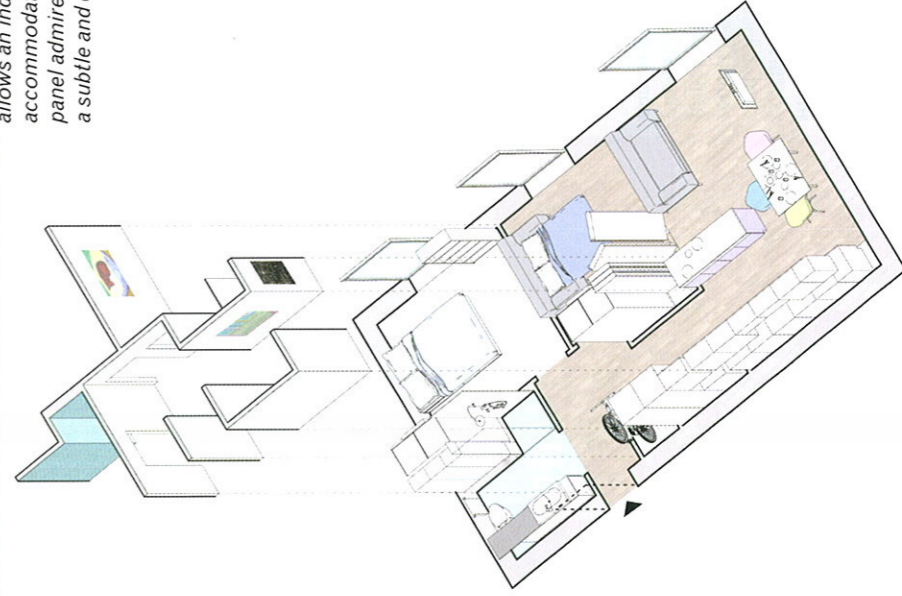
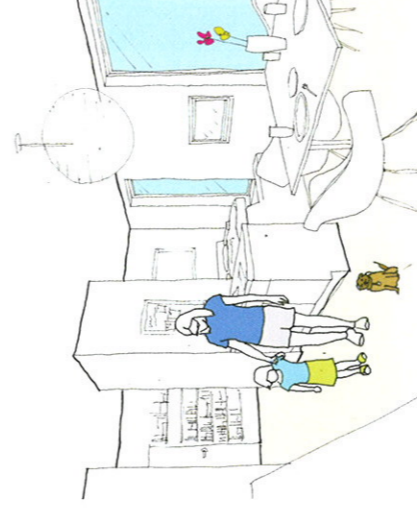
**Project synopsis**

A home is a space for living in. Traditional two-bed apartments often waste space. When the spare room isn't being used, this space would be better used as additional living area. Our home offers maximum space for living, with practical storage considerations. Young people's lives change and their homes should change to fit them, not the other way around. Our Pocket home is designed to accommodate all the exciting changes to the residents' lives.

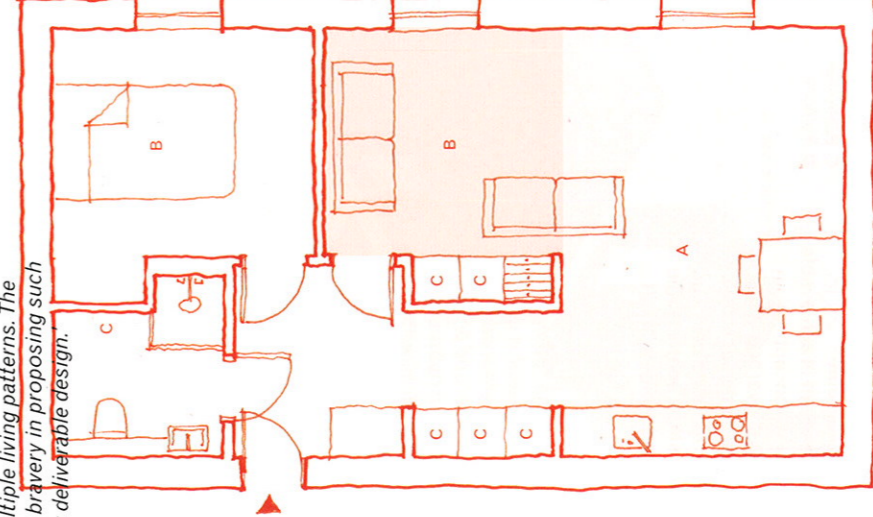
**Judges' comments**

'A relatively generic two-bedroom floor plan is liberated through the inclusion of a single folding/sliding partition. This simple device allows an identical volume to be used to accommodate multiple living patterns. The panel admired the bravery in proposing such a subtle and easily deliverable design.'

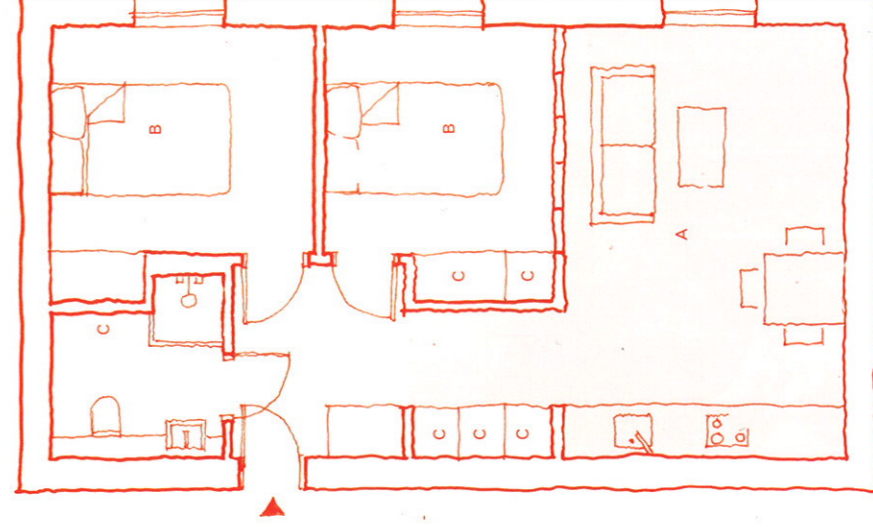
- KEY  
A. Maximised living space  
B. Bedroom space that adapts to life  
C. Practical storage and utility space



Axonometric



One-bedroom plan with guest room



Two-bedroom plan

# POCKET LIVING 2

52/58m<sup>2</sup>

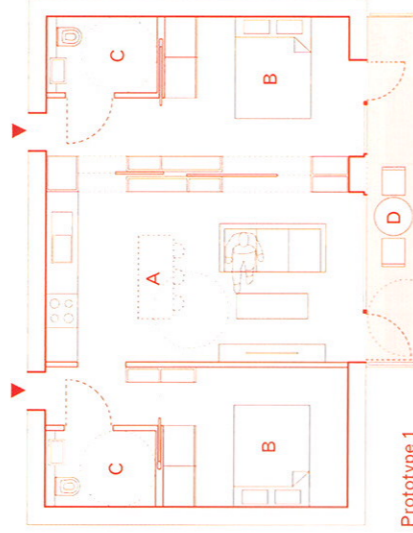
WESTON WILLIAMSON + PARTNERS

KEY  
A. Kitchen/living/dining  
B. Bedroom  
C. Bathroom  
D. Balcony

**Project synopsis**  
Our model is simple, desirable and delightful. It drives out spatial inefficiencies by demonstrating that a workable high-quality living environment is achievable in a compact area. Our two concept prototypes demonstrate an average 10 per cent reduction against current space policy requirements. Our concept places the principal activity space at the centre of the plan, supported by sleeping and washing annexes to either side.

**Judges' comments**

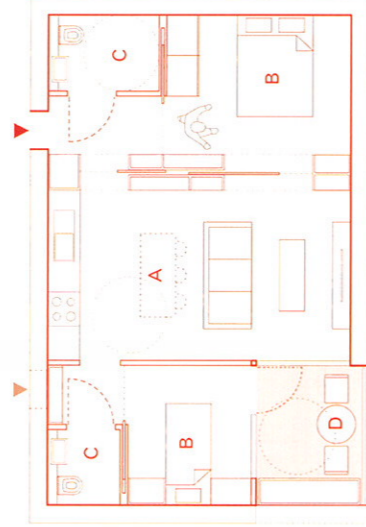
'Pocket Living 2, epitomises the "compact not micro" mantra. At 52m<sup>2</sup>, the layout is one of the most compact footprints proposed, but also one of the most functional and practical. The panel thought it offered an optimum balance of flexibility and practicality, with a generous storage allocation.'



Prototype 1



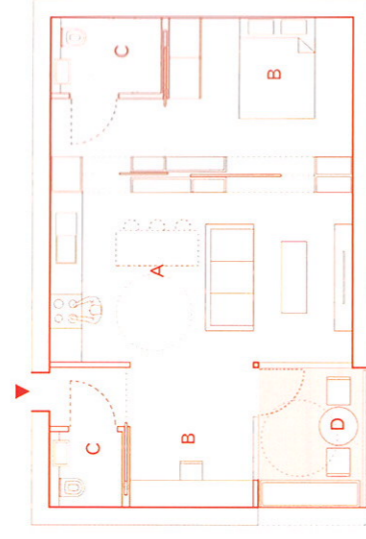
Prototype 1



Prototype 2



Prototype 2



Prototype 3



Prototype 3

# POCKET ROTUNDA

51m<sup>2</sup>

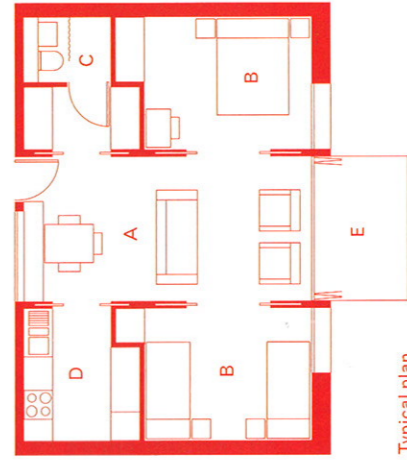
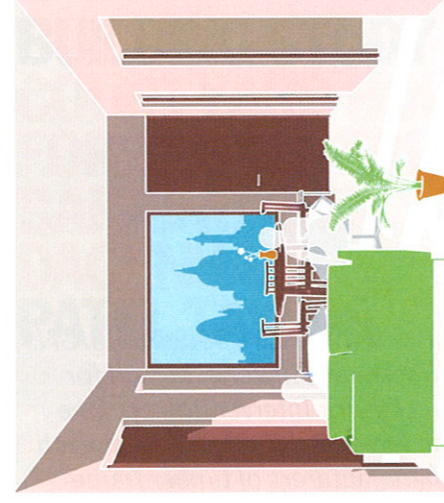
HENLEY HALEBROWN RORRISON

KEY  
A. Living/dining  
B. Bedroom  
C. Bathroom  
D. Kitchen  
E. Balcony

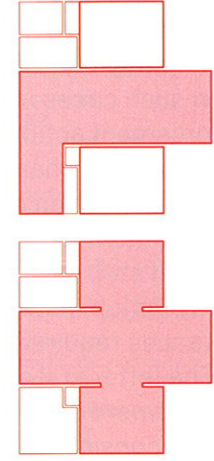
**Project synopsis**  
Our design is guided by two principles: one, Pocket Homes should form part of an 'intentional' community; two, a small apartment should not be compromised by complex functionality and ergonomics, and should – like Andrea Palladio's Villa Rotunda – be 'ideal'. The plan shares the biaxial symmetry of the Villa Rotunda. It plays down the more functional aspects of domestic space – the kitchen, bathroom and storage – to create an enfilade of spaces.

**Judges' comments**

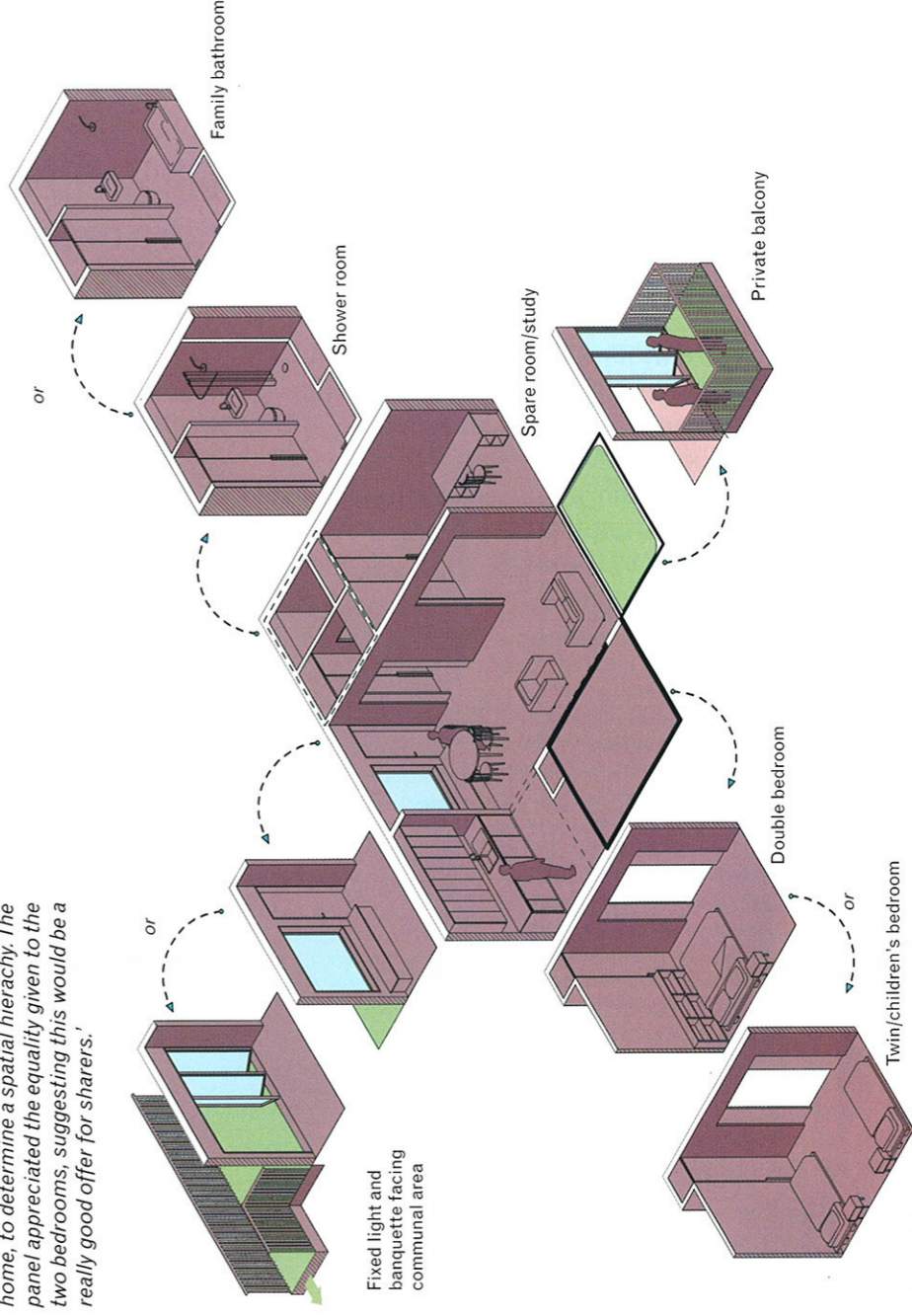
'The most compact of the entries, the Pocket Rotunda uses a degree of poetic licence in applying the Villa Rotunda to a two-bedroom home, to determine a spatial hierarchy. The panel appreciated the equality given to the two bedrooms, suggesting this would be a really good offer for sharers.'



Typical plan



Possible configurations



Exploded isometric