



Motel One

L O N D O N

Mackay + Partners has created the UK's first Corian-clad building for Motel One's debut in the London hotel market.

Words: Matt Turner | Photography: Courtesy of Motel One / Mackay + Partners

Looking out from the guestrooms at Motel One's new hotel on Minories in the City of London gives an up close view of the changing face of the capital's skyline, where The Gherkin now jostles for attention with Rafael Vinoly's 'Walkie-Talkie', the 'Cheesegrater' at 122 Leadenhall Street and the nearby Heron Tower. Such architectural monoliths often overshadow what is happening at street level around the Square Mile, where planners are more sensitive to the impact of new buildings on the urban environment.

It may not have the heft, scale or profile of any of the aforementioned buildings, but in its own small way, the Motel One is an intriguing addition to the London landscape, one which slots into its surroundings not as Portland Stone pastiche or starchitect-designed 'icon' but a slick, sensitively scaled, colour changing intervention. This is billed as "the UK's first Corian-clad commercial building," by its architects Mackay + Partners, who completed the project for developers Endurance Land & Scottish Widows Investment Partnership. The scheme replaces an unoccupied 1960s office and retail bank building, providing much needed new room stock in this area of The City.

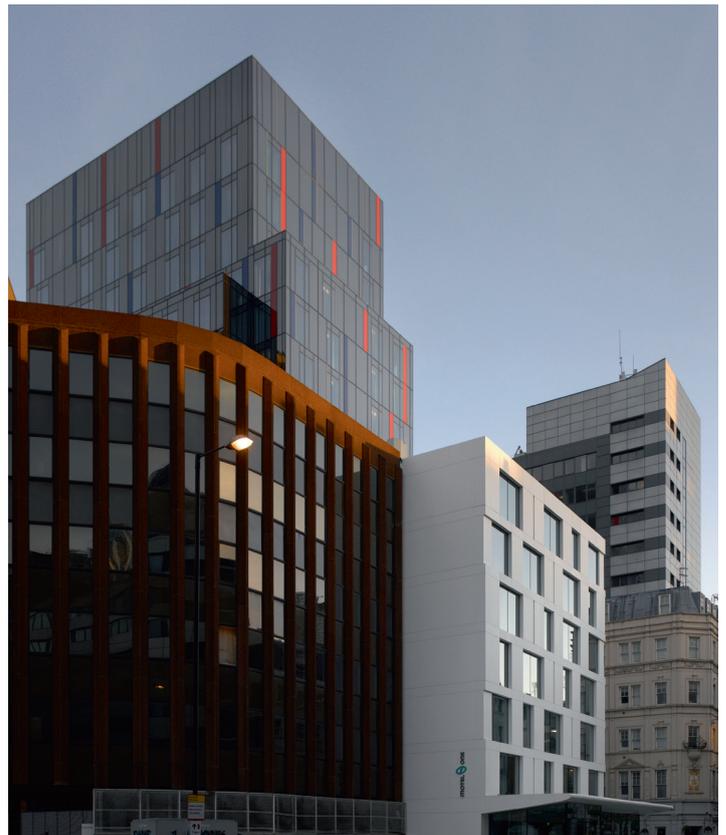
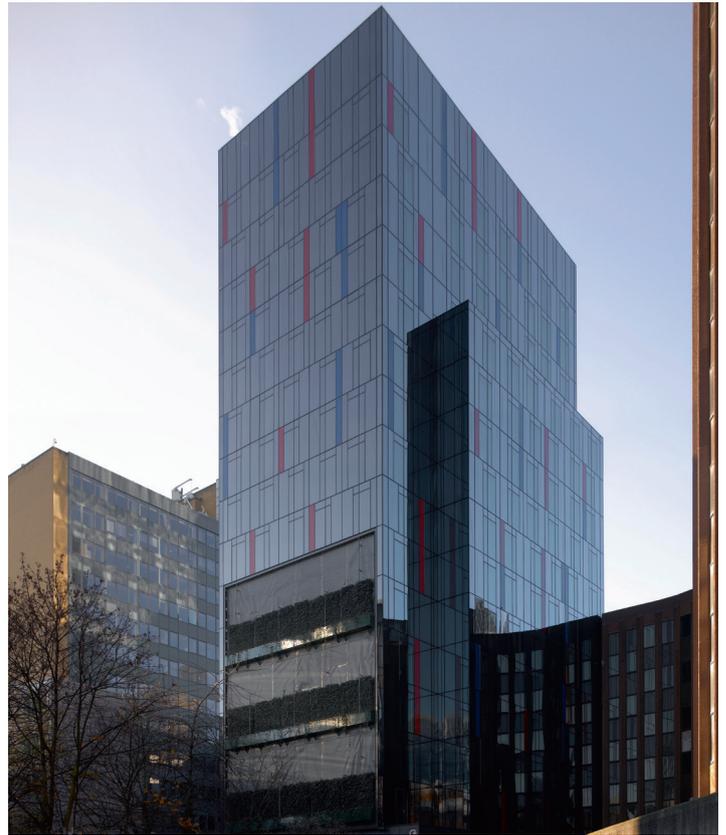
"The building has created a new contemporary focus and identity on The Minories that will act as a benchmark for future neighbouring developments," says Ken Mackay.

"From pre-planning stage, they gave full support to the design 'bulk and mass' of the building height. The design is entirely contemporary, yet fully responsive to its current and known future context."

The building comprises two forms: a seven-storey decorative cube, on the street-facing side and a 16-storey glass tower to the rear. The use of a solid surface material is heralded as an innovative and interactive approach to cladding typology in the city. "The planners were happy to explore a new material, rather than the traditional steel and glass or a Portland stone façade that is the general norm," explains Mackay.

Gwyn Richards, Head of Design at the development management division of the City of London concurs: "The building's vibrant and playful façades demonstrate that new hotel buildings need not have bland, monotonous and repetitive façades. The groundbreaking use of Corian as a facing material is innovative and convincing, both during the day and illuminated at night."







Above: Interior designer Katharina Schmid has been inspired by the Crown Jewels for her designs in the lounge area

Mackay + Partners prototyped and developed the etched Corian rain screen cladding with solid surface specialist Roskopf AG + Partners. LED lighting behind the façade, visible through the etches, allows the building to change colour from dusk to midnight via a computer controlled dimming system. The blues and purples chosen reflect the Motel One brand. The glazed rear tower element is set in colour contrast to the front white Corian cube. This contrast allows for the height change and the high-level set-backs that screen the double height plantroom at roof level. The façade is punctuated with inset flush LED strips that break up the bulk of the tower at night.

A high standard of sustainability has been achieved in all aspects of the development, which uses a number of intelligent building systems to help achieve a BREEAM excellent energy rating. These include the design of thermally efficient façades with just 35% glazing, heat recovery systems, and green roofs to mitigate rainwater run-off.

Inside, Katharina Schmid, Senior Interior Designer at Motel One, has brought a regal feel to the hotel's bar and lounge area. Inspired by the British Crown Jewels, the sparkling One Lounge, features

glamorous Swarovski crystals and a contemporary candelabra, combined with chesterfield-style sofas and tweed and velvet covered armchairs to create a traditional English feel.

Signature elements in the lobby include authentic Arne Jacobsen Egg chairs by Fritz Hansen, upholstered in Motel One turquoise, and classic Achille Castiglioni Arco lamp by Flos. Bathrooms in granite and glass have Dornbracht washbasin fittings, as well as monsoon rain showers while bedrooms have Artemide Tolomeo lighting and Loewe flatscreen TVs. Rooms are small, but the clever functional design ensures there is plenty of storage and hanging space.

The entrance of Motel One to the UK budget hotel market will be being watched with interest by the likes of Premier Inn and Travelodge. With properties already open in Edinburgh and Manchester, and further projects in development in Newcastle and London, CEO Dieter Muller believes his brand's combination of high quality design, central locations and affordable rates will appeal to UK consumers: "We see as much, if not more, potential in London as in Berlin, where we have eight hotels with over 2,000 rooms."

EXPRESS CHECKOUT: 291 guestrooms | 1 bar, living room and breakfast area | www.motel-one.com

Owner / Developer: Endurance Land & Scottish Widows Investment Partnership | Operator: Motel One | Architecture: Mackay + Partners

Interior Design: Katharina Schmid (Senior Interior Designer at Motel One)