

Centre Point – Public Access

The Southwark Option

1 Introduction

Building owners Almacantar, plan to refurbish the Grade II listed Centre Point Tower and convert it into residential apartments.

Based on queries raised by the local authority with regard to public access, Almacantar commissioned Britton McGrath Associates to review options for the inclusion of a public viewing facility and to advise on operational and commercial feasibility. Gerald Eve has advised on overall financial viability in the context of the redevelopment.

The feasibility of including a publicly accessible Viewing Gallery within the refurbished Centre Point has been analysed in detail. A series of five design options (plus two sub-options) have been developed to include full floor and part-floor galleries located on different floors.

The conclusion of this detailed analysis was that public access to Centre Point in the form of a Viewing Gallery is not practical due to the constraints of retro-fitting it into an existing, listed building the use for which going forward will be residential.

The report demonstrated that none of the options are commercially feasible and hence sustainable. Not only do they present a significant business risk to the developer, they are insufficient in terms of scale, appeal and likely returns to attract an operator. It follows that this is highly unlikely to be of interest to an operator as a result.

The local planning authority, Camden Council, as part of their assessment of the current planning application, has asked Almacantar and its advisors, to consider the option of “semi-public access”. This is based on a model adopted by Southwark Council for One Blackfriars, a 50-storey tower at numbers 1-16 Blackfriars Road which had approval for a ticketed sky deck on the 50th floor but which was subsequently amended to provide a semi-public “community” viewing lounge on the 32nd floor.

This new option is therefore referred to in this supplementary paper as, ‘The Southwark Option’.

This paper should be read in conjunction with Britton McGrath Associates’ earlier report, Centre Point Viewing Gallery Options Appraisal, dated 2nd April 2013.

2 The Southwark Option

2.1 Original Scheme

The original scheme to include a Sky Deck on the 50th floor was independently assessed and a feasibility study carried out that concluded the inclusion of a major visitor attraction in the tower was no longer considered a feasible proposition.

The key reasons for this were:

- The market had become increasingly competitive and the position of a new attraction in the market was brought into doubt following given the arrival of the Shard and the continued success of the London Eye and the finite market for viewing decks

- The commercial viability was low and carried the risk that a high quality competitive attraction was not sustainable which could lead to the potential for subsidy requirements in order to operate it over the long term
- The risk and financial profile was such that it would be impossible to attract any quality professional operator for the attraction
- There were operational issues with the design in terms of space and accessibility, in particular the possibility that queues could impact external areas as a result of limited entrance space
- The recommendation for a 2nd dedicated lift in order to accommodate visitors was judged impractical from the point of view of the viability of the residential scheme due to the impact caused by the loss of residential space through the building

2.2 Implemented Scheme

The revised scheme provides for a semi-public viewing lounge on the 32nd floor (halfway down the building) as opposed to a visitor attraction in the form of a publicly accessible sky deck. The key features of the revised scheme, which for the purposes of this report, is referred to as the Southwark Option include:

- a dedicated entrance area of 216 sq m – on a different level and the opposite side of the building to the residential scheme;
- a dedicated lift to a 32nd floor gallery/ lounge facility capable of accommodating 35 people;
- a lounge space of 260 sq m at level 32 fitted to a high (hotel lobby style) standard with IT connections and containing a separate WC, small kitchenette and equipment to enable meetings with a board room table suitable for 12 people;
- booking by the hour in advance for use by a limited profile of users:
 - local residents,
 - schools and businesses,
 - hotel users,
 - building residents,
 - landlord/ freeholder,
 - the London Borough of Southwark;
- only available within certain hours:
 - 1000 – 2000 Mon,Tues,Wed and Sat,
 - 1000 – 2200 on Thurs and Fri;
- the facility to be managed by the estate management company (at an estimated annual cost of £25k);
- a nominal booking fee for corporate users of £75 for one hour and £45 for subsequent hours with lower rates for educational and residential users of £50 and £30 respectively.

2.3 Centre Point Parameters

In applying the Southwark Option to Centre Point, it is worth noting the key parameters that were discussed with Camden Council and subsequently agreed for option assessment were:

- it should be at or very near the top of the building;
- it should be on the south side (to take advantage of the preferential views);
- it should be paid for via the service charge paid by residents;
- it should be managed by the estate management company; and
- airport security may not be required (see 3.3.4 below).

3 Applying the Southwark Option to Centre Point

3.1 Considerations

The following factors have been taken into consideration when assessing the application of the Southwark Option to the proposed Centre Point development. These are summarised as follows:

- the quality of views;
- operational access/ flow and impact on residents;
- layouts and impact on residential development;
- management, booking and supervision;
- security;
- recovery of costs;
- impact on residential value.

3.2 Layout

The Options Appraisal carried out to assess the feasibility of a viewing gallery in Centre Point considered the following five principal options, which together with the two sub-options, makes seven options in total.

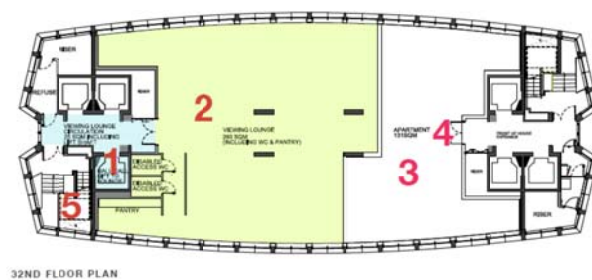
| Option / Description | | VG Floor | Height | Gallery | | Ground Floor | |
|----------------------|----------------------------------------------------|----------|--------|---------------------------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| | | | | Viewing | Circ | Entrance | Circ |
| 01 | Full gallery 33 rd floor | 33 | 107m | 335m ² | 21m ² | 116m ² | 31m ² |
| 01A | Full gallery 33 rd floor, walls removed | 33 | 107m | 344m ² | 21m ² | 116m ² | 31m ² |
| 02 | Large gallery 32 nd floor – north core | 32 | 104m | 116m ² + 6m ² = 122m ² | 25m ² | 116m ² | 31m ² |
| 02A | Large gallery 32 nd floor – south core | 32 | 104m | 116m ² + 6m ² = 122m ² | 25m ² | 155m ² | 17m ² |
| 03 | Small gallery 33 rd floor – north core | 33 | 107m | 37m ² | 25m ² | 116m ² | 31m ² |
| 04 | Full gallery 34 th floor | 34 | 110m | 432m ² | 55m ² | 116m ² | 31m ² |
| 05 | Full gallery 30 th floor | 30 | 98m | 398m ² | 55m ² | 116m ² | 31m ² |

In developing the Southwark Option for Centre Point, we have developed design options 02B and 02C. These most closely simulate the Southwark Option as follows:

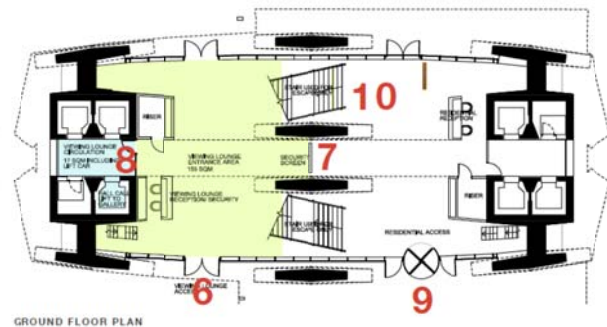
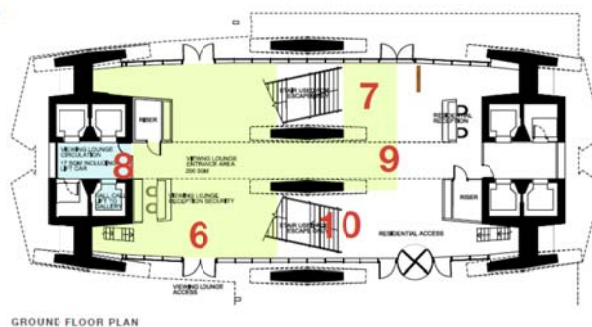
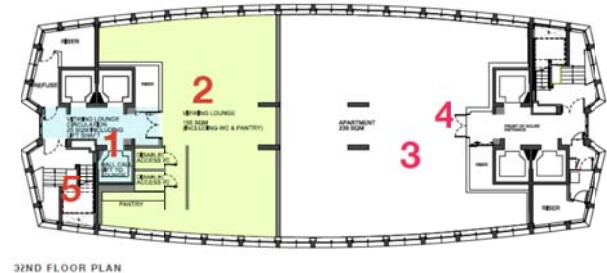
- Option 02B
 - Uses the areas set out in the planning report on Blackfriars; namely the viewing lounge space is 260 sq m and the entrance lobby 216 sq m
- Option 02C
 - Uses areas that have been adjusted downwards to enable a more practical fit within the building; namely the viewing lounge reduced to 180 sq m (incl. 25 sq m of circulation) and the entrance at ground floor reduced to 172 sq m (incl. 25 sq m of circulation).

For reasons of practicality option 02C will be referred to for the assessment. Thumbnail layouts are shown below and larger scale ones are shown in the appendix.

Option 02B



Option 02C



3.3 Operational Assessment

3.3.1 Viewing Lounge Capacity

Option 02C viewing lounge space of 155 sq m includes a pantry and WC facilities. If these are excluded then the useable space would be around 125¹ sq m. This would be sufficient for 40 people (at around 3 sq m per person). For a board meeting the addition of a suitable table and chairs whilst possible for a capacity of around 12 people would present issues with storage which could impact the space further.

Generally speaking this space would be sufficient for 35 persons depending on the usage occasion.

¹ Based on 155 sq m minus an allowance for a [disabled access] WC and kitchen facilities

3.3.2 Viewing Lounge Experience

Although the viewing lounge is located at the southern end of the building in order to take advantage of the superior views to the south of Centre Point tower, there is in fact, no direct line of sight to the south due to the need to accommodate risers, stairs and refuse – all of which are fixed and cannot be relocated. Further the incorporation of WCs, pantry and kitchenette will limit the views eastward too - the second best viewing direction.

3.3.3 Ground Floor Capacity and Entrances

The requirement for dedicated viewing lounge access has a significant impact upon the ground floor for a southern end viewing lounge. The staircase configuration currently in place would need to be reversed to allow residents to ascend to the mezzanine level and enable them to traverse to the south core lifts.

In addition the residential entrance would need to be at the northern end of the building meaning that the preferred entrance façade would be given over to the viewing lounge for which there would only be ad hoc usage. The southern end is preferred as there is direct access from the external plaza compared to the north which is underneath the link bridge.

A circulation space of 172 sq m (incl 25 sq m of circulation) would be adequate for the relatively light use of the viewing lounge as compared to a visitor attraction and could be made to accommodate a reception desk and a security area - see comments on security below. However, it is worth noting that this is significantly less space than the 216 sq m provided for in the Southwark option.

3.3.4 Security

As it is assumed that all users of the lounge will be pre-booked this affords some level of security checking albeit at a minimal level which may be deemed unacceptable from an operational and residents' perspective. Nevertheless all users and guests would need to be vetted against the booking and, or, a guest list and issued with security passes in the absence of airport style security.

This process can only be achieved by providing administrative and management resource in advance of the event and security or bouncer style presence during the event itself. Without this kind of security, events would be open to gate-crashing which would pose a very real risk to residents and their property.

For certain events there would be a need to also provide some form of supervision of the function where it is more of a party format involving alcohol and late access hours – in particular where events take place during evening hours and could have the most impact upon residents.

This is against a background of increased awareness of potential terrorist attacks on iconic / high profile places of interest. Airport style security therefore remains a real likelihood particularly in giving comfort to residents of the building.

3.3.5 Management & Costs

The level of management and administration may vary according to the level of use, however for security and operational requirements for example, changing the lounge configuration for users it is not something that could be carried out by the normal residential concierge staff who need to be in post continuously.

The tasks of booking and account administration, show rounds, facilities set up and break down, inspections and supervision of standard would require a dedicated viewing lounge resource in the form of an Event Manager.

The addition of a part time or even a full time viewing lounge Event Manager would, in our opinion, lead to significantly higher costs than the £25k p.a. quoted by St George in respect of 1 Blackfriars. In addition there are of course maintenance and cleaning costs to be factored in. In our view, actual running costs could be double or triple this figure.

3.4 Residential Scheme Impact

The impact of the viewing lounge on the residential scheme can be addressed in a number of ways. The impact on the overall scheme is not covered in this report, but there is scope to make some comments on the significant impact that this facility would have.

3.4.1 Operational Impact on Residents

The principle impact on the residential use is at the ground floor level. The entrance for residential would need to be located at what is considered the less attractive northern end of the building and will therefore may impact the saleability of the scheme generally.

Secondly, residents needing to use the south core lifts would have to transfer to the mezzanine level once inside the building either via the stairs or by a single stage lift. Once on the mezzanine the transfer would be across the viewing lounge entrance lobby at the higher level meaning that residents could see any arriving users for the viewing lounge.

The impact on south core lift wait time for residents would be significantly impacted on arrival of a large group of viewing lounge users, such as a class of school children.

3.4.2 Residential Space

The incorporation of a reduced area viewing lounge on level 32 (Option 02C), would still significantly impact on the accommodation for residential. There would be reduced space for the primary apartment with two or three bedrooms. This will of course have an impact on residential value within the scheme.

3.4.3 Security

As stated above, this will remain a concern amongst buyers who are highly influenced by the levels of people able to enter the building and the degree to which they are subject to security measures.

4 Summary

The incorporation of a viewing lounge would present significant issues for the scheme as summarised below:

- the residents' entrance would be compromised by moving to the less attractive, north end of the building;
- residents who need to use the south core lifts would be severely inconvenienced;
- it is not possible to completely separate viewing lounge users from residents due to the configuration of the ground floor and in this building there is no opportunity to create a completely separate, dedicated access as is provided at No 1 Blackfriars;
- the viewing lounge experience would not provide the desired south facing views and is limited to the eastern side as well - due to the configuration of the building and the need to include suitable lounge facilities;
- taking into account the need to provide storage and facilities the lounge space would only just have enough space for 35 people;
- the management of the viewing lounge and the requirement to minimise the impact on residents and keep the building secure is likely to need dedicated resource (most likely in the form of an Event Manager) outside of the normal residential concierge service - with an associated cost;
- the southern viewing lounge even with a reduced space will impact the residential scheme and the size and accommodation available for the prime level 32 apartment;
- the recovery of costs is likely to be insufficient through any nominal lounge user charges and the ability to recover the deficit via a service charge is questionable given the already high level of service charge anticipated by the developer for this particular listed building; and
- security would remain a major concern both in the running of the viewing lounge but also for residents purchasing apartments in Centre Point.

In conclusion, notwithstanding any calculation on the loss of value to the scheme and the overall impact on the viability calculations (to be provided by Gerald Eve), the introduction of a limited access viewing lounge is not feasible from both an operational and practical viewpoint within a listed building with limited floor-plates such as Centre Point.

OPTION 02B: VIEWING LOUNGE TO SOUTH CORE - USING SOUTHWARK AREAS FROM ONE BLACKFRIARS

ISSUES

DURING PEAK PERIODS OF USE, THE VIEWING GALLERY PASSENGER LIFT IS SHARED BETWEEN RESIDENTS AND VIEWING LOUNGE VISITORS.

LOSS OF APPROXIMATELY 270SQM FROM THE 32ND FLOOR APARTMENT

THE 32ND FLOOR APARTMENT BECOMES A 1-BED UNIT IN LIEU OF A 4-BED.

IMPACT ON THE SALES VALUE OF THE 32ND FLOOR APARTMENT DUE TO THE PROXIMITY OF THE VIEWING GALLERY, AND ON ALL OTHER APARTMENTS DUE TO A COMPROMISED GROUND FLOOR SEQUENCE

IMPACT ON SALES VALUE OF 32ND FLOOR APARTMENT DUE TO ENTRANCE FROM NORTH CORE

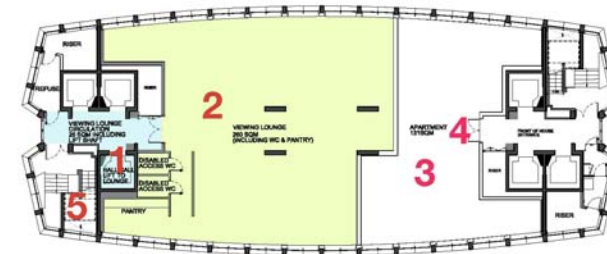
AFFECTS RESIDENTIAL ENTRANCE SEQUENCE - RESIDENTS WILL NEED TO TRANSFER TO THE SOUTHERN LIFT CORE AT MEZZANINE LEVEL. THIS WILL HAVE AN IMPACT ON THE SALES VALUE OF ALL APARTMENTS

RESIDENTIAL ENTRANCE LOCATED BENEATH BRIDGE LINK - IMPACT ON VALUES DUE TO LOCATION BEING PERCEIVED AS BEING LESS DESIRABLE THAN ENTERING FROM THE PIAZZA

RESIDENTIAL ENTRANCE IS VERY SMALL AND COMPROMISED DUE TO THE AREA TAKEN BY THE VIEWING LOUNGE ENTRANCE. THIS WILL IMPACT ON RESIDENTIAL VALUES AND IS UNWORKABLE.

FURTHER STRUCTURAL WORKS REQUIRED AT MEZZANINE LEVEL TO ACCOMMODATE ROTATED STAIRS

1. Lift shared with residential use.
2. Viewing Lounge: 260sqm including pantry and WC's. Storage for viewing lounge will also need to be factored in to this space.
3. 32nd floor apartment area reduced to 131sqm. This apartment will be a one-bed unit.
4. Apartment is entered via the north core - impact on values to be assessed.
5. With only one means of escape from the viewing gallery, the stair may need to be pressurised.

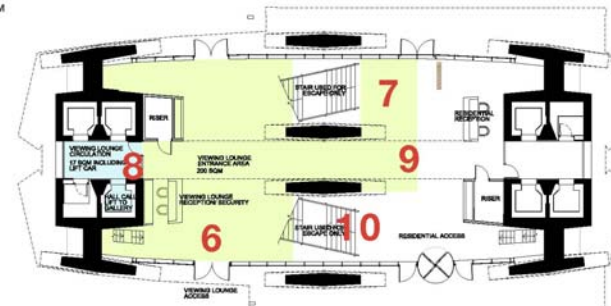


32ND FLOOR PLAN

32ND FLOOR VIEWING LOUNGE TOTAL = 260SQM

32ND FLOOR VIEWING LOUNGE CIRCULATION = 25SQM

6. A dedicated viewing lounge entrance is provided to enable name and security checks to be processed. Area provided is 200sqm + 17sqm lift lobby - the area given to the lounge entrance at One Blackfriars (216sqm).
7. This arrangement splits the ground floor plan and severely impacts the residential entrance lobby. This plan shows that a viewing lounge entrance of 200sqm is not feasible.
8. Lift is shared with residents. Residents need to enter the south core from mezzanine level.
9. Residential entrance is confined to north core - residents would need to transfer to south core at mezzanine level - this will have an impact on the sales value of all apartments.
10. Stairs to be rotated through 180 degrees - will need additional structural works to infill floor at mezzanine level.



GROUND FLOOR PLAN

VIEWING LOUNGE ENTRANCE = 200SQM

VIEWING LOUNGE CIRCULATION = 17SQM

0 5m scale 1:250@A3

OPTION 02C: VIEWING LOUNGE TO SOUTH CORE - REDUCED AREAS

ISSUES

DURING PEAK PERIODS OF USE, THE VIEWING GALLERY PASSENGER LIFT IS SHARED BETWEEN RESIDENTS AND VIEWING LOUNGE VISITORS.

LOSS OF APPROXIMATELY 161SQM FROM THE 32ND FLOOR APARTMENT

THE 32ND FLOOR APARTMENT BECOMES A 2 OR 3-BED UNIT IN LIEU OF A 4-BED.

IMPACT ON SALES VALUE OF THE 32ND FLOOR APARTMENT DUE TO THE PROXIMITY OF THE VIEWING GALLERY, AND ON ALL OTHER APARTMENTS DUE TO A COMPROMISED GROUND FLOOR SEQUENCE

IMPACT ON SALES VALUE OF 32ND FLOOR APARTMENT DUE TO ENTRANCE FROM NORTH CORE

AFFECTS RESIDENTIAL ENTRANCE SEQUENCE - RESIDENTS WILL NEED TO TRANSFER TO THE SOUTHERN LIFT CORE AT MEZZANINE LEVEL. THIS WILL HAVE AN IMPACT ON THE SALES VALUE OF ALL APARTMENTS

RESIDENTIAL ENTRANCE LOCATED BENEATH BRIDGE LINK - IMPACT ON VALUES DUE TO LOCATION BEING PERCEIVED AS BEING LESS DESIRABLE THAN ENTERING FROM THE PIAZZA

THE RESIDENTIAL ENTRANCE IS REDUCED IN AREA, WITH A POTENTIAL IMPACT ON RESIDENTIAL VALUES.

FURTHER STRUCTURAL WORKS REQUIRED AT MEZZANINE LEVEL TO ACCOMMODATE ROTATED STAIRS

1. Lift shared with residential use.
2. Viewing Lounge: 155sqm including pantry and WC's. Storage for viewing lounge will also need to be factored in to this space.
3. 32nd floor apartment area reduced to 239sqm. This apartment will be a two or three-bed unit.
4. Apartment is entered via the north core - impact on values to be assessed.
5. With only one means of escape from the viewing gallery, the stair may need to be pressurised.

32ND FLOOR VIEWING LOUNGE TOTAL = 155SQM

32ND FLOOR VIEWING LOUNGE CIRCULATION = 25SQM

6. A dedicated viewing lounge entrance is provided to enable name and security checks to be processed. Area provided is 155sqm, - smaller than the area given to the viewing lounge entrance at One Blackfriars (216sqm).

7. This arrangement splits the ground floor plan. Given the geometry of the listed ground floor elements, a security screen is proposed to minimise impact on the listed fabric. This will lead to compromises with respect to acoustic and visual privacy.

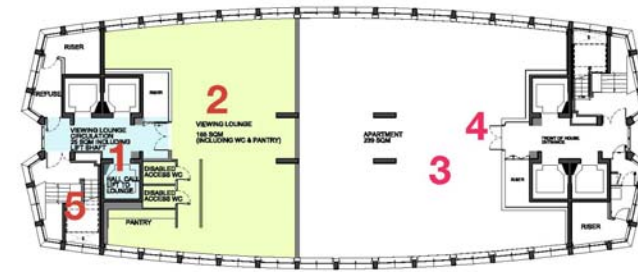
8. Lift is shared with residents. Residents need to enter the south core from mezzanine level.

9. Residential entrance is confined to north core - residents would need to transfer to south core at mezzanine level - this will have an impact on the sales value of all apartments.

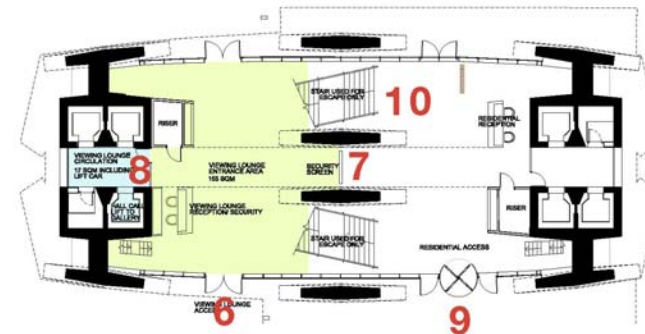
10. Stairs to be rotated through 180 degrees - will need additional structural works to infill floor at mezzanine level.

VIEWING LOUNGE
ENTRANCE = 155SQM

VIEWING LOUNGE
CIRCULATION 17SQM



32ND FLOOR PLAN



GROUND FLOOR PLAN

0 5m scale 1:250 @ A3

Centre Point | CONRAN + PARTNERS 3