

# SPHERE

PRICE £6/US\$12

## BORN TO RIDE

DAVID BECKHAM'S  
BIKING PASSION

## ONE FOR ALL

THE LUXE STORES  
THAT WANT YOU TO  
SHOP, EAT AND DANCE

## GAME ON

WHO'S COOKING UP  
THE BEST THIS AUTUMN

## PULSE

THIS SEASON'S  
MUST-HAVE  
WATCHES AND  
JEWELLERY

# Hit the heights

THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO LONDON'S HIGH LIFE

# ONE TO BEHOLD

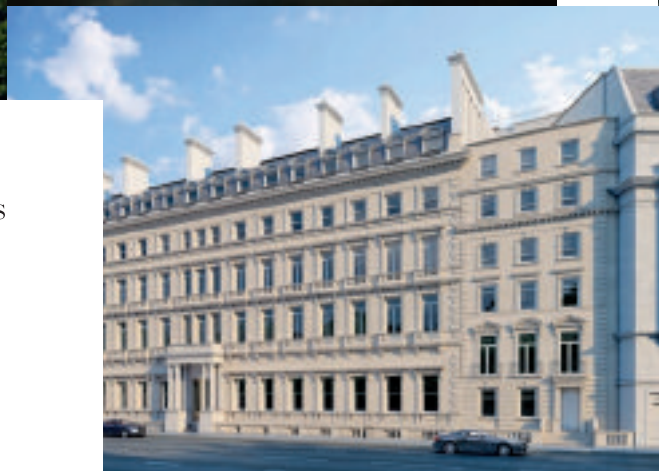


Iconic views and five-star luxury come as standard – but the latest enticement for London property investors is the lure of a premier address in a resurgent area

WORDS: ZOE DARE HALL

Central London's skyline changes by the month, with around 250 skyscrapers under construction and all vying for investors by promising the best views, concierge services and interior design. Competition is fierce, as seen in the recent release of Maine Tower in Canary Wharf, a 40-storey skyscraper whose 230 flats, priced up to £1.25m, all sold off-plan within hours.

Many buyers are from crisis-ridden Greece, seeking a financial safe haven in a location that offers timeless prestige or upward-mobility. But a new tranche of developments offers something else, an iconic address that is set to reinvent the surrounding area.



“London’s new Number Ones come with an address that suggests best in breed and the place to be — and they all offer incredible views”

Following the lead from One Hyde Park — where a penthouse sold in “core and shell” form for £140m last year — come London’s new Number Ones, with an address that suggests best in breed and the place to be. They offer incredible views — if not from lower flats, then certainly from the multi-million pound penthouses — but two will vie for the “best views” crown: No 1 Palace Street and One Tower Bridge.

At No 1 Palace Street, the palace in question is Buckingham Palace. The site is a former hotel, built in 1861 opposite the palace walls, and is no stranger to royalty, having been accommodation to those visiting Queen Victoria.

Used as government offices in recent decades, it comprises five Grade II-listed buildings which occupy an island site. They are being lavishly overhauled by Northacre as it creates 72 apartments that embrace the buildings’ eclectic architectural styles: 19th-century Italianate, French Renaissance, French Beaux Arts, Queen Anne and 21st-century contemporary.

“We’re not just selling apartments but a lifestyle,” says Northacre’s CEO Niccolò Barattieri, “and an island site gives a sense of

community. There are no neighbours, just the residents who will overlook a central courtyard.”

Buyers might be more interested in another view — the one over the Queen’s sprawling 42-acre garden which, as well as a lake, includes tennis courts and a helicopter pad. “My favourite apartment is one of the six penthouses where the views are so good, you may even be able to see the Queen walking her corgis,” jests Barattieri.

With such privileged views, you might imagine security would be an issue, but Northacre’s CEO insists not. “Buyers will be vetted, but the palace has been extremely helpful,” he says. The price of the properties will prohibit all but the most serious of buyers, with the penthouses costing up to £30m (020 7349 8000; northacre.com).

Other selling points include the apartments’ palatial rooms with original period features and ceilings of up to 4.7 metres. “For some buyers, it’s about their art collection,” says Barattieri — and residents will have access to “a 360-degree lifestyle app” to book everything from massages to the private dining room. “Our facilities are not an afterthought. They’re at the forefront of the development,” he says.

Whizz over to the South Bank and, at the forefront of Berkeley’s One Tower Bridge, is the iconic bridge itself. It features so magnificently in the view from each river-facing flat — with prices starting at £1.475m for one bedroom, rising to £15m for a 5,000sq ft, three-bed penthouse — that there is no need for the distraction of art.

It’s not easy being a Number One in an iconic, protected spot like Tower Bridge and this project has been 13 years in the making, with another two remaining. Still, 92 per cent of the 373 flats have sold and many buyers who began as pure investors are now making it their home. “Since the buildings emerged, they have turned a lot of people, which is great as we didn’t want a ‘lights out’ development,” says Berkeley’s development manager, Douglas Acton.

No doubt the view had something to do with their change of heart. Tower Bridge feels close enough to touch, but City landmarks play a starring role in the view from every room, including from the bespoke wood veneer bath tubs, which sit alongside a glass wall so you can enjoy the panorama while you soak. However,



**Opening page:** One Tower Bridge master bathroom.

**Clockwise from right:** One Tower Bridge exterior and penthouse staircase; living/dining area at One Blackfriars; One Hyde Park Terrace living area and terrace; the historic facade at No 1 Palace Street

should you feel a sudden need for modesty, you can frost the glass at the touch of a button.

The other perks on offer to One Tower Bridge residents are a five-star gym and spa and opulent black-and-gold swimming pool created by the pool designers at One Hyde Park and Dubai's Burj Khalifa. There's also the £1m underground car park whose interiors were designed by Conran and Partners to include marble walls, a

car-stacking system and a ceiling that resembles a sports car's grille – although you're unlikely to linger when you can gaze across Tower Bridge from your sofa.

One Tower Bridge faces competition from a shimmering 50-storey tower that is starting to emerge a little further west along the river. One Blackfriars from Berkeley's St George is fast gaining the nickname "The Boomerang" due to its curvaceous outline and it sits next to the new Blackfriars station, dwarfing all around it.

Its neighbours also pale price-wise as One Blackfriars' 273 flats, set around a new public piazza, range from £1.15m to £23m (020 7871 7188; [berkeleygroup.co.uk](http://berkeleygroup.co.uk)) – a hefty price tag for an area that, until recently, was dominated by office blocks and scarcely seen as a residential address, much less a luxury one. But buyers are convinced and the tower is already 70 per cent sold. As Rory Cramer, senior director at CBRE, explains: "It's set in London's cultural hub, next to the new Mondrian hotel. Buyers who would have bought more centrally in Westminster or Covent Garden are now looking here. They get this area and it's now a place where people want to live."

Head west and an entire new neighbourhood is being crafted on the riverfront in Battersea. Propelled by the redevelopment of Battersea Power Station, Nine Elms is one of London's biggest regeneration areas and is set to become



**Above:** city views from one of the penthouse apartments at One Commercial Street in Aldgate; looking along the Thames from the terrace of One Nine Elms, close to Vauxhall on London's South Bank



the city's new diplomatic district, with several embassies preparing to relocate from far pricier addresses in Mayfair and Belgravia.

One Nine Elms is Wanda One's new riverfront scheme and River Tower is its latest offering. One-bed flats start at £1.3m (Strutt & Parker, 020 7629 7282; CBRE, 020 7182 2477; onenineelms.com) and the project is due for completion in winter 2018. The 530ft skyscraper will be London's first residential tower fully serviced by a five-star hotel, Wanda Vista. Residents will be able to lap up luxuries from the on-site hotel, including gym, spa and maid

service on demand, "similar to One Hyde Park", says Cramer. "One Nine Elms, which sits close to Vauxhall station, is the gateway to the regeneration area, a new quarter being delivered on a scale that London hasn't seen before."

"There was a lot of scepticism about how this area would progress, but every new scheme, including Embassy Gardens and Riverlight, has seen massive success among an international and domestic market," he says. "Residents at One Nine Elms will benefit from the huge amount of new retail and leisure that are being built nearby."

"A new generation of City workers is realising the value of being able to walk to work, and the E number postcodes offer proximity and lower prices"

While most of London's new Number Ones inhabit newly desirable areas of centrally located riverfront, Redrow's One Commercial Street is bringing the Manhattan look and lifestyle to a previously unprepossessing part of East London, which is now the "City fringe".

What's changed? A new generation of City workers is realising the value of being able to walk to work, and the E number postcodes offer proximity and lower prices – although not for much longer, perhaps, with penthouses at One Commercial Street starting at £2.75m (020 3489 0293; onecommercialstreet.com).

The area's other big game-changer is Crossrail, which arrives at Whitechapel station (a 10-minute walk from One Commercial Street) in 2018 to whisk local residents to Canary Wharf in three minutes and Heathrow airport in 39 minutes. As a result, property prices in Whitechapel are likely to rise by up to 54 per cent by 2020, 19 per cent above the Greater London average, say Jones Lang LaSalle.

Many new lifestyle developments for the City crowd, such as concierge services and residents' clubs, are springing up locally. But One Commercial Street is setting a new architectural tone with its New York-influenced *brise soleil* on the façade and bringing a new level of luxury to the crossroads between East London's curry houses and the City's gleaming towers.

"Aldgate was the forgotten corner of the City fringes and devoid of any real character, but the area has gone through a renaissance over the past decade," says Stephen Porter from Stirling Ackroyd's new home sales team. "It will start to fulfil its potential in the next couple of years as a large number of first-class towers are completed."

It goes to show that while many may be first class, only a select few can be number one.