



## Room at the top, in the middle of town

It was one of London's first and most controversial skyscrapers and still divides opinion today, but Centre Point, the love-it-or-loathe-it, 34-storey tower that stands sentry-like over the entrance to Tottenham Court Road Tube station, could soon be London's hottest new residential development (Deirdre Hipwell writes).

Mike Hussey, the developer who bought the

building out of administration for £120 million in March, is mulling plans to convert it into high-end residential apartments for the first time in its 46-year history.

In the next few weeks the developer's Almacantar vehicle will open discussions with Camden Council about the future options for the Grade II-listed skyscraper.

Mr Hussey completed a

deal this week to sell a 25 per cent stake in the tower for about £30 million to Frogmore, the property company. Paul White, chief executive of Frogmore, who made the investment through its FREP II fund, said that Centre Point "had been on our radar since 2010".

Designed by the architect Richard Seifert, Centre Point was built speculatively by the reclusive English millionaire Harry Hyams. He leased the site at £18,500 a year for 150 years and worked hard to secure consent for such a tall building.

No firm plans have been

drawn up yet and any design or change of use would be subject to consultation with the council. However, it is thought that the building is a perfect prospect for conversion to residential use.

The tower, once described by Nikolaus Pevsner, an architecture critic, as "coarse in the extreme", has 4,000 sq ft floorplates with no columns or obstructions and could accommodate a number of different-sized apartments. With the surge in values in London's residential market, a change of use could help to underwrite its future.