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### Las Colinas to add a new Element

Hotel will blend upscale and long-stay niches

Dallas Business Journal - by [Sandra Zaragoza](#) Staff Writer

Starwood Hotels' newest hotel concept is finding its element in Las Colinas.

Element, an upscale, extended-stay brand targeting business travelers, is set to be built at Addison-based [Cross Development's](#) Regent Cross retail development at the southwest corner of Interstate 635 and Belt Line Road.

Element is the newest brand and the first extended-stay concept to emerge from New York-based [Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide](#), which also operates the Westin, Sheraton and W brands.

When the Element hotel opens in Las Colinas in 2008, it will be one of the first for the chain nationally and likely will be the first in Texas. The first Element is slated to open in Lexington, Mass.. in early 2008.

Ajay Kothari of Sava Group, an Irving-based hotel development company, said his company is bringing the Element brand to Las Colinas. The price tag for the hotel is \$11 million, 20% to 30% of which will be financed by private equity.

"We approached (Cross Development) with a product that is fresh and responsive to the current business traveler," Kothari said.

Brent LeBlanc, Starwood's regional vice president of development for Element and the new W aloft limited-service brand, believes Element will go over well in Las Colinas.

"We feel this will be the top extended-stay brand in the (Las Colinas) market," LeBlanc said.

Dallas-based [Gatebridge Hospitality](#) is developing five W aloft hotels and plans to open several in 2007. Locations have not been named, but Gatebridge is targeting downtown Dallas, Fort Worth, Frisco, Plano and Las Colinas.

Starwood is in talks with developers across the Lone Star State, and LeBlanc believes the North Texas market eventually could support 15 to 20 Element hotels. The company says it ultimately plans for 500 Elements across the country.

Strong market

Starwood unveiled the Element brand in September at the 2006 Lodging Conference in Phoenix.

Element, which falls under the [Westin Hotels & Resorts](#) umbrella, represents Starwood's effort to break into a category often associated with budget vanilla boxes and cramped kitchenettes.

Element's design includes a water feature and an outdoor area with a fire pit and barbeque. Westin customers also will enjoy familiar features such as the signature scents, "heavenly" beds and workout facilities.

Rooms will boast kitchens, pantries and stainless-steel appliances. The office area includes modular furniture.

Once built, lodgers will be able to stay at the Element hotel in Las Colinas for between \$110 and \$150 a night.

By comparison, Residence Inn by Marriott at Las Colinas charges guests \$149 to \$159 a night for a studio.

Hotel expert Greg Crown, of [PKF Consulting's](#) Dallas office, says Element is entering a crowded part of the North Texas hotel market.

"There are eight to 10 extended-stay hotels in the Las Colinas and north D/FW Airport markets," Crown said. "But I would suspect that it is an extremely strong (extended-stay) market. To add another competitor is not out of the question at all."

Kothari said his company had been scouting for sites in Las Colinas, an area dotted with Fortune 500 corporate campuses, when they settled on Regent Crossing, where Cross Development is laying the infrastructure for a \$12 million, 30,000-square-foot retail development. Cross also is near closing on an additional 36 acres where it plans more mixed-use development. Cross has tapped Scott Rose and Eddie Liebman of The Weitzman Group to lease to retail customers.

A high-end, extended-stay hotel fits in with Cross' retail plans and the surrounding corporate landscape, said Casey Shire, president of Cross Development.

"All four corners are (occupied) with developers who have major plans. It is going to be a very dynamic area," Shire said.

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Kenneth Brock

SIGNS: Starwood Hotels' newest hotel concept, Element, an extended-stay brand targeting business travelers, is set to go up at Cross Development's Regent Cross project in Las Colinas. Pictured at the location are, from left, Steve Rumsey, Casey Shires, Tim Gilean, and McAlan Duncan with Cross Development.

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