

(Online news)

Homewood Suites joins Wallingford hotel scene

By Mary Ellen Godin, Record-Journal staff

WALLINGFORD — Homewood Suites by Hilton has become the third hotel to open at the junction of Route 68 and Interstate 91.

The 104-room hotel is marketed for longer-stay travelers, who need more space for business or leisure travel. It's on Miles Drive behind the Fairfield Inn, about 1,000 feet from the Courtyard by Marriott.

"Greater New Haven is a strong hotel market in need of additional upscale extended-stay hotels like Homewood Suites and we are thrilled to be the third property to open in the area," said Manager Christine Zuchinsky. "We are the ideal place for those travelers who are away from home or office for several days but still need to have all the benefits, such as a full kitchen, executive business center and complimentary high-speed Internet access."

The Briad Lodging Group of New Jersey annexed the 5-acre parcel from a 114-acre property owned by the Bellmead Development Corp. in 2000. The remaining 109 acres are now being eyed as a possible headquarters for the Mortgage Lenders Network USA.

Briad sought and won permission from the town in July 2000 to build a 118-room Spring Hill Suites, also owned by Marriott. The same year, Susse Chalet became the Fairfield Inn, which led to the changing of the name of the road from Chalet Drive to Miles Drive, Town Planner Linda Bush explained.

Marriott also owns Fairfield Inn, meaning that all three hotels would have been owned by Marriott, which Marriott representatives said at the time wasn't unusual.

But a softening in the hotel industry forced Briad to put its plans on hold and the parcel sat empty until February 2003, when Briad won permission to build a Homewood Suites. Construction, estimated at \$3.4 million, began last fall.

The Homewood Suites by Hilton hotel is owned by Apple REIT Six Inc. of Richmond, Va. and managed by White Lodging Services Corp.

The four-story Homewood Suites features residential-style studio, one- and two-bedroom suites with a fully equipped kitchen, sleeping and living areas for working, studying, entertaining or relaxing. Each suite has an alarm clock with connection cables for MP3 players and other portable music devices. The hotel is also equipped with an on-site convenience store, exercise facility and laundry.

Guests also get a complimentary hot breakfast, a complimentary light meal in the evening and beverages Monday through Thursday evenings. The hotel also provides complimentary grocery shopping and a business center.