

PRESS RELEASE

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Element Hotels, Starwood's "Green Trailblazer," Earns LEED "Volume Pre-certification" From U.S. Green Building Council

New Building Prototype, Based on Element's Sustainability Successes, Makes it Even Easier for Developers to Build Green



WHITE PLAINS, N.Y., Aug 02, 2010 (BUSINESS WIRE) -- Eco-chic boutique Element Hotels, which is the first major hotel brand to mandate that all its properties pursue USGBC's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification, has achieved LEED Volume Pre-certification from USGBC for its prototype design which will automatically qualify new build hotels to pursue LEED designation.

With the Volume Pre-certification approval announced today, Element Hotels makes it more simple, faster, and less costly for developers and partners to pursue LEED certification of new properties, according to Paul Sacco, Senior Vice President of Development for Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide, Inc. (HOT 51.67, +0.13, +0.25%) .

"Building from a prototype that's already LEED pre-approved means that Starwood helps our partners substantially reduce consulting fees, spend less on applications and certifications, and minimize documentation requirements wherever possible," Sacco said. "This presents a real incentive for partners and developers to join us in the pursuit of more sustainable buildings and greener operations."

The Volume Pre-certification initiative is part of USGBC's Portfolio Program, which enables companies and building owners to integrate LEED into new and existing building projects using a cost-effective, streamlined certification process without sacrificing the technical rigor and integrity of LEED. The Portfolio Program recognizes market leaders who have committed to and achieved high levels of LEED certification within their portfolio. Through a volume certification, a majority of LEED prerequisites and credits can be "pre-certified."

"By using LEED certification across its building portfolio, Element has demonstrated its dedication to economic, environmental and human health," said Rick Fedrizzi, President, CEO and Founding Chair, U.S. Green Building Council. "Buildings represent a tremendous opportunity to address climate change, energy dependence, increasing operating costs and the need for good green jobs. To maximize this opportunity, we need to focus on our entire building stock, and achieving LEED certification at the portfolio level is a great way for an organization to move us closer to that goal."

Element's LEED Volume Pre-certified prototype is based on the brand's Lexington, MA property, which achieved LEED Gold certification in 2008. At that property, sustainable strategies led to 20 percent more energy-efficiency; a 32 percent reduction in water use, for a savings of nearly 942,000 gallons; nearly 70 percent of power purchased as Green Power; and the use of low-VOC (volatile organic compounds) materials throughout the hotel.

The Element brand also created a groundbreaking online "LEED Developer Roadmap" to support its partners in pursuit of environmentally responsible development. The Roadmap utilizes the learning from Element Lexington and provides a cost-effective strategy and guidance on the execution and documentation of LEED-NC, including strategies on why and how a specific credit was pursued.

At Element, which has become Starwood's "green lab," LEED certification is just the stepping-off point for sustainability initiatives, added Brian McGuinness, Senior Vice President of Specialty Select Brands for Starwood. "Building more efficient hotels is just the beginning for us. We've developed a Green Operations program for Element that ensures that even after opening and achieving LEED certification, hotels operate in a sustainable manner. Initiatives like our Sustainable Meetings program, bike rentals, electric-car charging stations, and green cleaning all contribute to conserving natural resources and reducing waste. And, all these initiatives also serve to enhance the overall guest experience."

Starwood itself recently revealed plans to significantly reduce energy and water consumption at every one of its 1,000 hotels within a decade. Starwood will aim for a 30 percent reduction in energy use per available room by 2020; the company will also work toward a 20 percent decrease in water consumption per available room by 2020. The initiative builds on a long-standing commitment to conservation and sustainable operations at Starwood. The Element brand's LEED initiatives helped lay the groundwork for Starwood's own sustainability program.

Element: Green from the Ground Up

Launched by Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide, Inc. in 2008, the Element brand delivers a no-compromise, eco-chic experience enhanced by comfortable and inspiring

public spaces, modern touches, and smart design. Element Hotels is the first major hotel brand to mandate that all its properties pursue the US Green Building Council's (USGBC) Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification for high-performance buildings.

Element hotels' green features are cleverly designed to be as aesthetically appealing as they are eco-friendly, so guests never compromise on style and comfort. Eco-friendly materials are used whenever possible and natural light is maximized throughout the hotels. To reduce waste, guest room bathrooms are equipped with amenity dispensers, kitchens are supplied with silverware and glassware instead of plastic utensils and paper cups, and filtered drinking water is available rather than plastic water bottles. Recycling bins are available in guest rooms and public areas. Element conserves water and energy with low-flow faucets and fixtures, compact fluorescent light bulbs, and energy-efficient appliances. Even the ubiquitous "Do Not Disturb" sign has been replaced with an environmentally-friendly magnet.

Most recently, Element Hotels installed electric car charging stations at all its currently open properties to contribute to the development of the infrastructure needed in anticipation of the number electric vehicles expected to be on the market over the next several years.

Element Hotels, like all brands within Starwood's portfolio, is proud to offer the Starwood Preferred Guest(R) program, which offers a breakthrough policy of no blackout dates on Free Night Awards. To learn more, please visit www.spg.com.

About Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide, Inc.

Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide, Inc. is one of the leading hotel and leisure companies in the world with 1000 properties in nearly 100 countries and territories with 145,000 employees at its owned and managed properties. Starwood Hotels is a fully integrated owner, operator and franchisor of hotels, resorts and residences with the following internationally renowned brands: St. Regis(R), The Luxury Collection(R), W(R), Westin(R), Le Meridien(R), Sheraton(R), Four Points(R) by Sheraton, and the recently launched Aloft (R), and Element(SM). Starwood Hotels also owns Starwood Vacation Ownership, Inc., one of the premier developers and operators of high quality vacation interval ownership resorts. For more information, please visit www.starwoodhotels.com.

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