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Coventry

From rocks, sand, economic pay dirt

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For



motorists traveling on Route 95 in the last few years, the changes in what was long a huge gravel pit next to Exit 7 can be startling.

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For motorists traveling on Route 95 in the last few years, the changes in what was long a huge gravel pit next to Exit 7 can be startling. Construction at The Centre of New England, a 480-acre mix of residential and retail property, has transformed the once rock-strewn area into what will soon become one of the largest complexes of its type in Southern New England. Some of the Centre's anchor stores — BJ's, Home Depot and Wal-Mart — as well as more than a dozen smaller businesses, left, have been up for awhile, but now a luxury 300-unit apartment complex, at the end of a six-lane boulevard, above, has all but been completed. Work continues on a 1,500-unit condominium complex on adjacent Hopkins Hill Road, of which 311 units are finished. Also planned, according to developer Nicholas E. Cambio, is a Marriott Residence hotel, more stores including a large department store and four national restaurants. The project, mostly in Coventry but also encompassing property in East Greenwich and West Greenwich, will be completed in phases, with the retail portion expected to be finished by 2008 and the remaining residential units by 2010.

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