

Clarification Statement - 2019-12-02

205 Kent Street - Conditional Use Permit Application

This statement is to clarify and reinforce the intended use of the proposed development at 205 Kent Street and does not reflect a change in thinking or intention by the Cranwell Foundation. Rather, it is recognition and acknowledgment of the confusion and misunderstanding surrounding the Foundation's intentions based on recent conversations with the Town of Blacksburg Planning Staff. The documentation supporting the 205 Kent Street CUP Application has been amended to reflect this clarification.

The intended primary use of the proposed development at 205 Kent Street is to house a permanent office for the Cranwell Foundation (an extension of the Bill and Ellen Cranwell Charitable Trust), providing a headquarters for the Foundation's permanent staff to manage the day-to-day operations and to fulfill the mission of the Foundation in three interconnected arenas:

- Support the international community in Blacksburg and at Virginia Tech through the established connection with the Cranwell International Center
- Support culture and art initiatives of the New River Valley
- Increase awareness of and support mindfulness practices

The Cranwell Foundation will use 205 Kent Street as its home-base to manage its support of these and future causes in the community.

In service to the Foundation's mission, the proposed development of 205 Kent Street includes a multi-purpose space to allow for small gatherings. For example, this space could accommodate an international student dance group at Virginia Tech who needs space to prepare for an upcoming performance or host a meeting for a student group. Alternatively, a small group of 15 students, faculty, and community members may convene to hold a round table discussion surrounding a current issue facing the Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, and New River Valley community. Additionally, a small group may gather to investigate a new mindfulness practice or technique and discuss ways to promote its use within the community. These are a few of the potential ways 205 Kent Street could be used to facilitate, promote, and support the Cranwell Foundation's mission. In all cases, these are small, informal gatherings that are anticipated to take place on an occasional basis and will not be regularly scheduled.

On a limited basis, the Cranwell Foundation will host larger functions, such as potentially hosting speakers, lectures, and musical performances that are connected to the Foundation's mission as well as a limited number of fundraising functions (which may include private gatherings) and outreach events.

Under the direction of the Town of Blacksburg Planning Staff, based on the intended use indicated in the previous paragraphs, the proposed development of 205 Kent Street was classified as 'office' use with an accessory 'club' use. Throughout the development of the Project, and especially since determining the use classification, a discussion about larger events and gatherings has dominated the discourse, despite the fact that these functions will take place infrequently and on a limited basis. Because of this focus, the CUP application concentrated on addressing this type of use rather than the day-to-day primary use as office space for the Cranwell Foundation. This has created confusion and obfuscated that intended primary use.

Contributing to this confusion is the number of events indicated in the CUP Application. The Cranwell Foundation recognizes and understands this confusion and in order to further clarify its intended use and alleviate confusion and concern, the Foundation amends this number to the following:

- Annual maximum of an average of one (1) gathering per week with more than 30 attendees;
- Annual maximum of sixteen (16) events with more than 50 attendees.

These numbers reflect the Cranwell Foundation's intention to utilize 205 Kent Street primarily as office space for its day to day operations including a limited number of gatherings in support of its mission and goals in service to the community.