



Chief Planning Officer
Folkestone & Hythe District Council
Folkestone
CT20 2QY

20 January 2026

Comment on planning application

Reference no:	25/2100/FH & 25/2084/FH
Site address:	Methodist Church, 153 Sandgate Road, Folkestone CT20 2DA
Proposal:	Erection of a new community hub incorporating worship space, community cafe, offices, pantry (food bank) and overnight shelter accommodation, following demolition of the existing building
Officer:	Robert Allan
Stance:	COMMENT

Dear Mr. Lloyd,

The New Folkestone Society's planning sub-committee considered the above application at a meeting on 20 January 2026 and would like to make the following comments:

- We are pleased to see the Methodist Church partnering with the Rainbow Centre to create a community centre with homeless support services. The inclusion of meeting rooms is particularly welcomed, as it is difficult for community groups to find somewhere to meet at a reasonable rate. It was regrettable that the Methodist Church once again found structural defects in their building and appreciate the cost of rebuilding is significant, so such a partnership is a sensible solution to ensure the project is completed, whilst maximising use of a building that might otherwise only be used for services.
- Whilst we quite like the Church section of the proposal, the interior mock-up suggests the half-glazed frontage will create quite a dark building. It might be preferable to consider whether a fully-glazed frontage might be more welcoming, with appropriate screening for privacy or to keep excess light out as needed. The left side of the frontage is rather bland and likely won't weather very well, so more glazing might be increase visual appeal from the street – even if not fully-glazed.



- However, we have serious reservations about the block section that abuts the Grade II Listed Building next door. There should be more separation and better consideration to complementing the Listed Building. It would appear that the windows are at opposing heights to those of Clock Tower House, which will create a visually jarring appearance to the streetscene. The modern materials and colour scheme are not really in keeping, either.
- We note concerns from neighbours around potential antisocial behaviour, but this would need to be on the grounds of a well-evidenced 'fear of crime' or 'perception of harm' basis. As the Rainbow Centre already operates in Sandgate Road 300 metres from the proposed site and intend to move their operations next to the Church, we are not convinced that there would be an increase in crime. Perhaps it would be wise to consult with Kent Police's Designing Out Crime Officer on this matter?

Yours sincerely,

Mark Hourahane
Chair, New Folkestone Society planning sub-committee