

Case Study: Cultural Centre, Southend Pier

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Photos: Luke Hayes

Glazing by Kawneer features on Southend Pier's new cultural centre

Kawneer's AA®100 zone-drained curtain walling, AA®601 fixed light casement windows, and series 190 heavy-duty commercial entrance doors and AA®605 low/medium-duty swing doors now help to frame the view of the Thames estuary from Southend Pier.

Building: Cultural Centre

Location: Southend Pier

Architect: Sprunt/White Arkitekter

Main Contractor: Kier Construction

Installer: Drayton Windows

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Kawneer systems herald a sea change for Southend

Kawneer's AA®100 zone-drained curtain walling, AA®601 fixed light casement windows, and series 190 heavy-duty commercial entrance doors and AA®605 low/medium-duty swing doors needed to be capable of withstanding the extreme environment on Southend Pier and also able to withstand being part of a cultural centre that had to be craned into position in its entirety.

The Kawneer systems were installed off-site at Tilbury by specialist sub-contractor Drayton Windows for main contractor Kier Construction.

The 376m² building was then towed on a barge to the pier head, one mile out at sea, and lifted into position at high tide using a 400-tonne marine sheer leg crane. But not before on-site testing ensured the pier's 100-year-old piles were capable of withstanding the 170-tonne weight of the new building.

The length of Southend Pier has been a challenge ever since it was originally built but the angular landmark now features a cultural centre comprising a 150-seat multi-purpose hall, an artist's studio and a café.

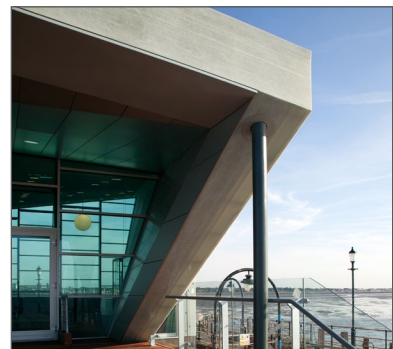
An international competition for ideas to revamp the pier head that attracted more than 70 entries was won by Swedish practice White Arkitekter who originally designed a group of three buildings.

But after the local authority's bid for a £5million grant from the CABI-administered and culture-focused Sea Change fund was rejected and the budget halved, the design was reduced to two and then a single unit.

This has, however, proved more than sufficient to persuade visitors to pay the £2 to walk the nautical mile or £3.60 to take the easier option on the miniature train.

The design, delivered in collaboration with executive architect Sprunt, had to evolve to counter many challenges including a flood analysis which meant the internal floor level had to be raised on a plinth 1.6m above the board walk.

In addition, Natural England's concerns that rare gulls would crash into the extensive Kawneer glazing were countered by a deepening of the glass tint to contrast with the silver-anodised glazing bars which sit discreetly in the renderings.



Please contact our Architectural Services Team if you have a project you would like to discuss: Tel: 01928 502604 / Email: kawneerAST@arconic.com

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