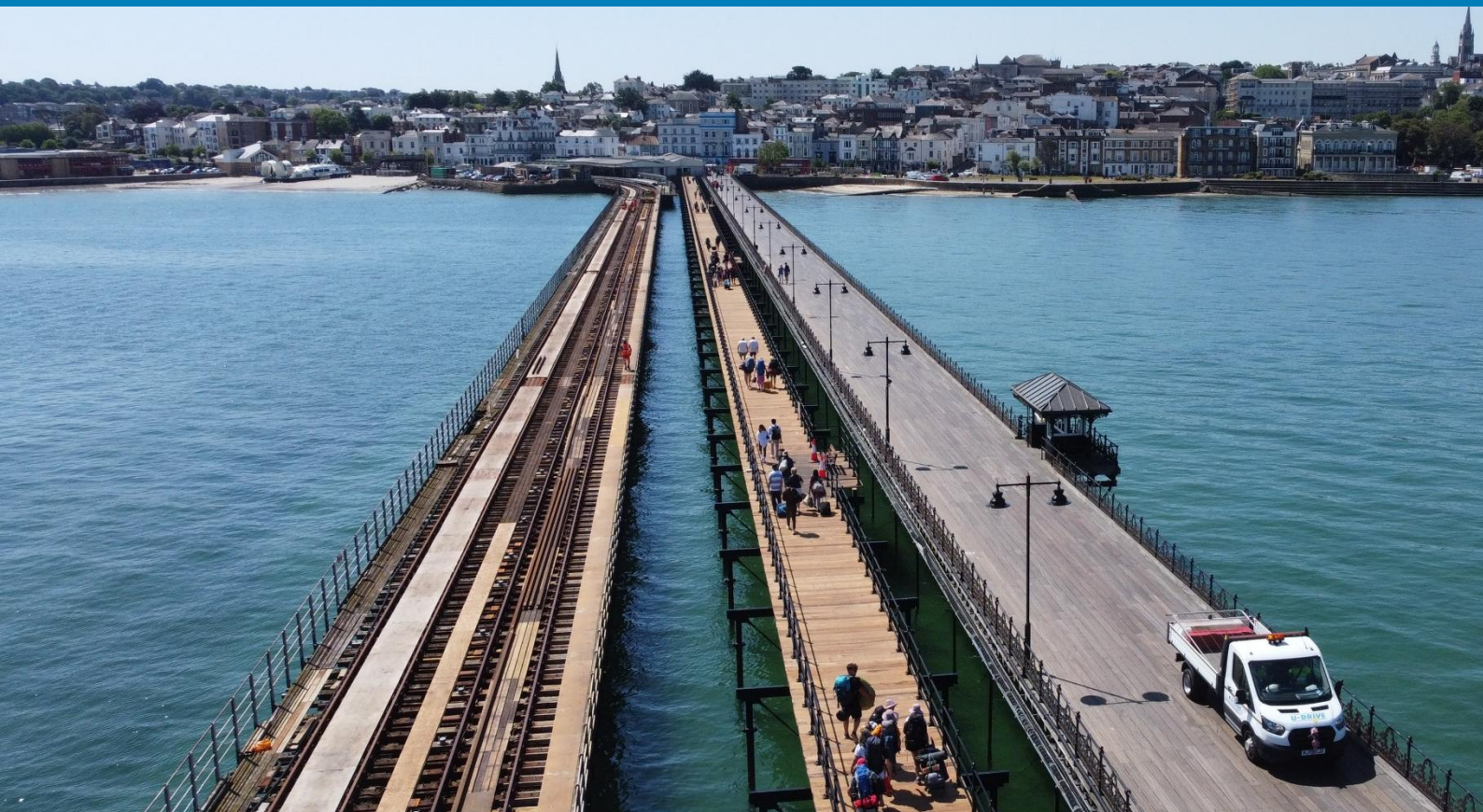




A historic pier was transformed through sensitive marine engineering, creating a safe, accessible walkway that preserves heritage while serving modern transport needs

Location: Isle of Wight

Client: Wightlink Ltd

Value: £4.2m

Contractor: Knights Brown

Hospitality / Modern Extension / Heritage / Listed



Project Background

Ryde Pier on the Isle of Wight, the UK's oldest seaside pier, required a new pedestrian walkway to replace the redundant 19th-century tramway. The project was part of Wightlink's long-term transport strategy and aligned with Transforming Cities Fund improvements. AWA were appointed as project manager and consulting engineers, delivering structural and marine design that respected the pier's Grade II listed status while ensuring durability in a harsh coastal environment.

Engineering Approach

AWA led assessment of the original cast-iron screw piles and steel grillage, many showing corrosion. We designed strengthening measures, replacing pile heads and replicating original patterns to maintain historic character. The steelwork superstructure was developed to carry pedestrian and cycle loads while minimising additional weight on heritage foundations. Galvanised nuts and bolts were hand-painted black to match the original aesthetic. Working within tidal constraints, AWA coordinated safe construction sequencing for contractors on a live marine site, including work in tidal zones and variable weather.

Project Outcome

The walkway now provides an accessible link between Ryde Esplanade Station and the pierhead. Shelters and seating offer views across the Solent, while the structure secures the pier's long-term preservation. AWA's role demonstrates expertise in complex marine refurbishment, combining engineering precision with sensitivity to heritage and community benefit.

