



Deal Pier (AR July 2006), Kent, is a bare-bones structure that Niall McLaughlin Architects likens to the skeleton of a beached whale or the ribcage of a ship. Built on unadorned concrete piles, it has a pared down, matter-of-fact quality. Niall McLaughlin Architects concluded that its Deal Pier Café and Bar should preserve an al fresco quality, providing an ideal setting for a cup of tea or supper at the end of the pier while dealing with the challenges of an endlessly changeable maritime environment. The architect set out to do this also in a pared down, matter-of-fact sort of way.

Contextual and budgetary limitations underpinned the need for a building in which every component is essential. The modular, repeated structural frame has one kind of column and one kind of beam. A fringe of projecting hardwood slats shades the long east and west walls from the sun, with angled slats that retain transparency. Elements of the external structure double up to create essential windbreaks.

The untreated hardwood frame exploits wind and salt in the prevention of mould and algae growth, and within a year it will have weathered to a silver-grey colour, matching the pier.