

BUILDING DESIGN
FEBRUARY 2004



We're on the way to Wembley!

Weighing in at 40 tonnes apiece, these two fabrications will be playing a crucial, if unseen, role at the new Wembley Stadium now under construction in North London and due to open in two year's time.

The fabrications, designed by Rotherham-based consulting engineers Bennett Associates and manufactured by AK Heavy Engineering in Sheffield, are the bearing blocks on which the most striking visual feature of the new stadium, a massive 133-metre-high steel arch, will stand. The structure will span the whole stadium and support the north roof and 60 per cent of the weight of the south roof, which will be retractable to allow sunlight and fresh air to reach the grass. At 315 metres long, it will be the longest single roof structure in the world. The bearing blocks, now being installed on site, have been designed to carry loads of 3000 tonnes each when the arch is in place. They also have to rotate so that the arch, which will be fabricated and attached to the blocks on the ground, can be pivoted into its final vertical position. Once the roof is in position, the blocks will be welded to form a permanent rigid structure.