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NEWS

Shouldering the arch at Wembley Stadium

Weighing in at 40 tonnes apiece, these two fabrications are the bearing blocks on which the new Wembley Stadium's enormous arch will stand. The arch, which will be 133m high, will span the whole stadium and support the north roof and 60% of the weight of the south roof.

The bearing blocks, now being installed on site, were designed by Rotherham-based consulting engineers Bennett Associates and made by AK Heavy Engineering in Sheffield. They have been designed to carry loads of 3,000 tonnes each when the arch is in place.

The steel bearing blocks are 3.5m high and incorporate 250mm-thick base plates and fins and vertical plates up to 340mm thick.

The picture below, taken last week, shows the final section of Wembley's arch being welded on. This clears the way for the giant structure to be lifted into place within weeks.

The new stadium should be completed in early 2006. It will seat 90,000 spectators.