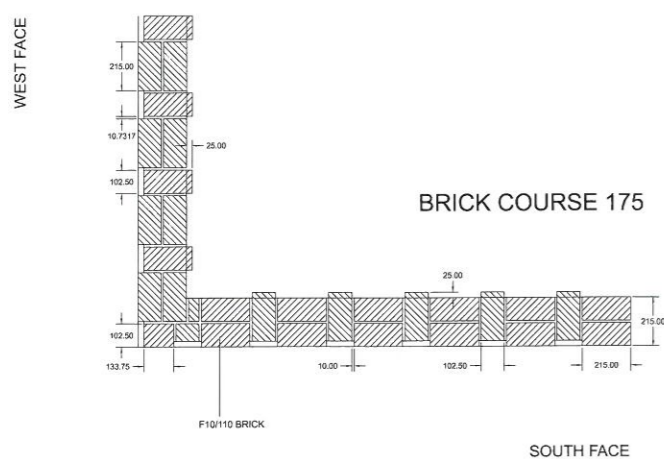
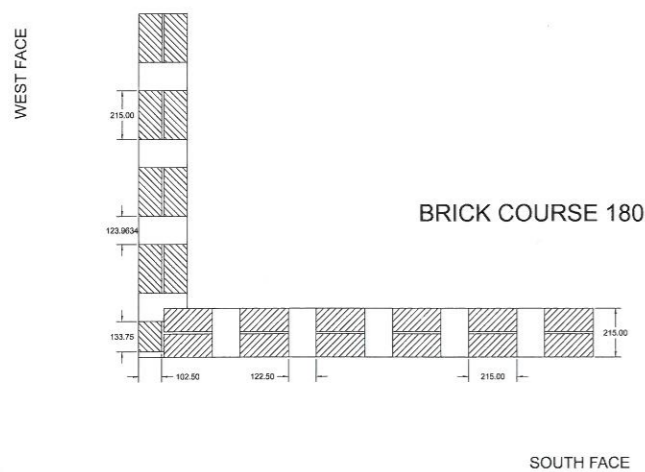
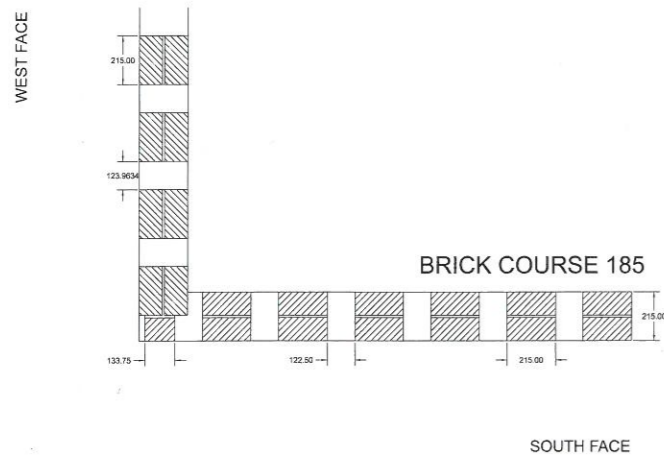


# Electrical Substation, Olympic Park, London

**Architect:** Nord Architecture  
**Brick Type:** Himley Ebony Black  
**Contractor:** Kier Construction  
**Brickwork Contractor:** Winchmore Brickwork



In 2007 NORD were appointed to work with the Olympic Delivery Authority to develop a strong contextual approach to a key utility building within the Olympic Park. The building is not designed as an event in its own right but as part of a number of buildings that form the fabric of the Olympic site itself, having permanency, weight and dignity.

A clear emphasis was put on the architectural designs of the electrical substation to ensure the structure fits in with the design of the wider Olympic Park. The external substation architecture creates a sense of solidity appropriate to the building's role as a key part of the utilities infrastructure in the Olympic Park. The use of more than 130,000 bricks in the design also reflects the traditional use of dark brick stock, as window and corner details on the former Kings Yard industrial buildings on the site where the new substation has been built.

At 80m long and made from Ebony Black brick, the substation is legible at first as one uninterrupted surface; however the envelope is a more open lattice than it appears. In lower sections, the brick operates as a load-bearing structure, in others simply as a skin and in the upper sections it permits ventilation for the internal transformers.

Across the length of the building the height varies - the eastern tower was designed to be lower in height, facilitating a viewing corridor to the Olympic Stadium in the south-west, as well as a view to central London, St Paul's and the Swiss Re tower.

Sustainability is at the heart of the substation design through the reuse of materials from the demolition of the former Kings Yard buildings. The building also includes a 'brown roof' which will allow species to naturally colonise the site, enhancing the ecological value and biodiversity of the Olympic Park site by attracting local wildlife. The roof's weight supplements a blast protection strategy, one of many technically demanding aspects of a challenging brief.



“We congratulate the client and architects for producing a real piece of architecture out of an everyday brief. We think this is an object lesson in how even relatively minor parts of the Olympic programme can benefit from committed design thinking.”

The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) and Design for London (DfL)

