The Barking Power Plant capable of generating 1,000-megawatts in east London is a unique venture for many reasons. It was the first independent power project in southeast England and the first large generating station to be built in Greater London in more than 30 years. The plant uses an advanced combined-cycle technology that enhances fuel efficiency and reduces emissions. The Barking project provided an opportunity for ATCO Power to demonstrate its credentials in working with partners, customers and suppliers to bring a project through a broad range of complex technical, regulatory and organizational challenges.

Thames Power Limited, the project developer, was established in 1988 by BICC plc, now Balfour Beatty plc, an international engineering and cable manufacturer. ATCO Power joined Thames Power as operating partner in 1989.

ATCO Power seconded a number of senior executives to lead Thames Power’s efforts to secure necessary site agreements, financial arrangements and the turnkey construction contract. Under supervision by ATCO Power, in its role as the owners’ engineer, construction was completed on time and significantly under budget.

ATCO Power holds a 50% stake in Thames Power, which in turn owns 51% of the Barking project.

Thames Power Services, supported by ATCO Power, is responsible for all operations, maintenance and business activities of Barking Power. Commercial operations began in mid-1995 and since that time the plant has performed well. With low NOx emissions, the plant has one of the best environmental records in Europe for a gas-fired power plant.

The Barking Power Plant came out of its 15-year long-term contracts at the end of 2010 and a partial temporary lay-up of the 1,000 MW capable station took place in response to negative market conditions and low power prices in the United Kingdom. In spite of this, capacity is being maintained to enable quick ramp-up of generation when electricity prices are economically viable. The power station is positioned to return to full operation as the economy recovers.