

ONE HUNDRED & FIFTY YEARS OF
QUANTITY SURVEYING

DAVIS LANGDON PKS

1860 TO 2010

One Hundred Years of Quantity Surveying – the Annals of Patterson & Kempster 1860–1960

by Gordon Aston was published in 2007.

The present volume gives a synopsis of the first hundred years based on Gordon Aston's volume,
and deals in more detail with developments since 1960.

MICHAEL WEBB

Hinds

Published by Hinds
13 Carlisle Avenue
Dublin 4
Ireland

First published 2012

Copyright © Michael Webb

ISBN-13 978-0-9528236-9-8

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in or introduced into a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means (electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise), without the prior written permission of both the copyright owner and the publisher of this book.

Typeset in Bodoni Book
Design by Bill Murphy Design
Printed in Ireland by Turner's Printing

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF ILLUSTRATIONS		vii
FOREWORD		ix
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS		xiii
CHAPTER 1	1860 to 1960	1
CHAPTER 2	1960s	15
CHAPTER 3	1970s	21
CHAPTER 4	1980s	29
CHAPTER 5	1990s	37
CHAPTER 6	2000s	43
CHAPTER 7	THE PKS REVIEW	51
CHAPTER 8	CONCLUSION	59
ANNEX	150 YEARS – SIGNIFICANT PROJECTS	63
INDEX		71

TABLE OF ILLUSTRATIONS

206 North Brunswick Street, Dublin (now Pearse Street)	2
St Anne's, Clontarf, Dublin	3
17 Kildare Street, Dublin	3
Royal Victoria Eye and Ear Hospital, Adelaide Road, Dublin	5
Royal College of Science, Merrion Street, Dublin	6
Ravensdale, Co. Louth	10
Ballynastragh House, Gorey, Co. Wexford	10
John Player Factory, South Circular Road, Dublin	10
Fatima Mansions, Dublin	12
Gordon Aston	13
Harp Lager Brewery, Dundalk	17
Wesley College Dublin	19
Arts Building, Trinity College Dublin	27
Dining Hall, Trinity College, after the fire of July 1984	31
Dining Hall, Trinity College, after restoration, 1985	31
The O'Reilly Institute, Trinity College Dublin	33
Irish Architectural Archive catalogue of the exhibition <i>PKS Quantity Surveying Since 1860</i>	37
The Green Building, Temple Bar, Dublin	39
The Old Library, Irish College, Paris	41
Brown Thomas, Grafton Street, Dublin	41
Grand Canal Theatre, Dublin	47
Terminal 2, Dublin Airport	47
National Aquatic Centre, Dublin	47
The Spire, O'Connell Street, Dublin	49
Portumna Castle, Co Galway	62
National Museum, Kildare Street, Dublin	62

St Colman's Cathedral, Cobh	62
The Four Courts, Inns Quay, Dublin	64
Provincial Bank of Ireland, College Street, Dublin	64
Brown Thomas, Grafton Street, Dublin	66
University College Cork – Information Technology	66
Cork Civic Offices	68
Beacon South Quarter, Sandyford, Co. Dublin	68
NUI Galway – New Engineering Building	68

FOREWORD

I am very pleased to write the foreword to this book which celebrates the 150 year history of Davis Langdon PKS.

The first 100 years (1860–1960) were eloquently recorded by Gordon Aston, a partner of Patterson Kempster and Shortall (PKS) for 33 years. Gordon Aston's typescript was edited and ultimately completed by Michael J.T. Webb, the company's Managing Partner, in 1999.

At the company's sesquicentennial (150th) celebrations in 2010, Michael committed to the sequel and through this publication brought the company's 150 year history up to date. It is only through his dedication and determination that this piece of history, which captures that ever changing period in the construction industry, was committed to print.

It would be fair to say that, in reporting on the business since its sesquicentennial to the present day, I may have escaped rather lightly, however, as can be evidenced, a lot has happened in this short time.

By the end of 2009 Davis Langdon PKS, after a ten year engagement, had formally merged with Davis Langdon. This merger was led by Norman Craig, Managing Director since 2006. The five partners in Davis Langdon PKS now found themselves part of a

rather larger grouping of seventy-one partners. These partners were well known to each other having worked together on various joint projects over the previous ten years.

As documented in the book, the long association between the two practices and the ultimate merger was a very successful one. Projects such as the National Aquatic Centre, the Spire, Terminal 2 and many more were seen as joint successes bringing local knowledge and resource together with truly global expertise in specialist arenas. It was the foresight of Michael J.T. Webb and his original connection with Nick Davis that ultimately led to this successful merger and brought the original PKS along the next steps in its journey.

The company was now part of a limited liability partnership (LLP) with about 1,500 people in the Europe and Middle East business, of which Ireland was now part, and over 3,500 people worldwide. Due to the long association the merger itself meant very little change to the day to day running of the business. However, one change which was inevitable was the global harmonisation of the name.

Quite a number of the Davis Langdon businesses around the globe held their legacy names e.g. Davis Langdon Adamson in the USA, Davis Langdon Seah in Asia, Davis Langdon Farrow Laing in South Africa etc. Like PKS, the original names of these businesses had very strong roots in history but all had bought into the global vision for the business.

Davis Langdon Everest, which operated in the EME had links back to Bobbie Everest, a descendant of Sir George Everest the British Surveyor General of India (1830 – 1843) who gave his name to Mount Everest. Davis Langdon Everest led by example and became the first to shorten its name to Davis Langdon. Around that time I remember a particular plane journey to London where a fellow passenger took me to task for Davis Langdon ‘dropping’ the Everest from their name and questioned ‘whether we understood the significance of the name’. That was a long flight!

And so it was that in 2010 Davis Langdon PKS became Davis Langdon. As with any change in brand there is a period of adjustment to the new name and our people became very used to being called a variety of names, including PKS, DL, DLE, Davis Langdon, DLPKS, during their working day!

During 2010 the construction industry continued its downturn into the third year and all practices continued to downsize against a backdrop of macro economic turmoil. Davis Langdon in Ireland were somewhat sheltered by their mix of work in both the public and private sector and the fortunate timing of a number of larger projects which extended though the initial years of the recession. Significant projects like the €650m

Terminal 2 at Dublin Airport, the proposed €650m National Paediatric Hospital, the €1.2bn Grangegorman campus for DIT and a host of other medium sized projects served to bolster the company's turnover and retain its talent during a very tough period in Ireland's history.

In January 2010 the equity partners of Davis Langdon, including the Irish Partners Norman Craig, Donn O'Shaughnessy, Paul Mitchell, John O'Regan and Martin Andrews, were invited to a special equity partners meeting in London to discuss an undisclosed topic. Non-disclosure agreements were signed before partners were admitted to the secretive gathering where they were informed of an approach by a large American corporate multi-disciplinary firm who were very interested in merging/acquiring the global business of Davis Langdon.

AECOM Technology Corporation (NYSE: ACM), a leading provider of professional technical and management support services for government and commercial clients around the world with a staff of over 45,000 people were looking to acquire a global Cost and Project Management company to complete their service offering on construction projects.

This meeting was the start of a new chapter for Davis Langdon.

Rob Smith, Senior Partner in Davis Langdon London had committed to bring the five regions (EME, Africa, USA, Asia and ANZ) of Davis Langdon into one structure with central governance. This was always going to be a difficult task. Another one of Davis Langdon's business goals was to achieve the same level of success in large scale infrastructure projects as they enjoyed in the commercial and residential sectors. From this perspective the AECOM approach ticked all the boxes. A lot of due diligence and business suitability testing was done over the course of 2010 culminating in the public announcement in August 2010 that AECOM had acquired the 2,800 strong Davis Langdon business. Davis Langdon & Seah, the Asia part of the business remained independent, but continued to work with AECOM's Davis Langdon operations under the existing collaboration agreement.

In Ireland the acquisition meant that the business now had additional strings to add to its bow, including traffic consultancy, structural engineering, environmental services, economic consultancy and water engineering. Its numbers grew from 65 to 125 and a further 100 people were added in the Belfast office.

In a time of decreasing construction output in the industry, diversification, expanding geographic reach and market share were key drivers in the business.

In February 2011, after sixteen years in the company, I assumed the responsibility

for Ireland's operations which completed its first full financial year under AECOM in September 2011. It was a successful year strengthened by a number of new commissions in places such as Chile, Bratislava, Haiti and South America, won as a result of our new connections in the AECOM family.

I am very proud to be part of a business with such a rich history; to have advanced in a career with such an ethical and respected company and to be able to bring those skills and professional standards onto a global stage within a larger business community. In March 2012, AECOM was voted one of the 'World's Most Ethical Companies' by the Ethisphere Institute which was a fantastic achievement.

I hope you enjoy the second instalment of this journey. We look forward to the next one!

Paul Mitchell
Head of Office – Ireland
Davis Langdon, An AECOM Company