



Recent Trends – Builders Assuming Unnecessary Commercial Risk

There seems to be a trend of builders accepting the commercial risk of the unknown latent geotechnical conditions. Even with a comprehensive geotechnical report, testing is only a few randomly selected boreholes and probes. These may not always typically reflect the real conditions over the entire site. Unless testing is done at every pile position it is impossible to accurately quantify the full extent of the piling required. I have for a long time now highly recommended that the builder does not enter into a building contract that includes the piling works at a fixed price. The potential risk is enormous.

Mother earth can be extremely variable

A recent example which highlights this are as follows. The site had a geotechnical investigation that can only be

described as preliminary with 2 boreholes to 4.0 m deep and one to 8.0 m deep and all conducted along the rear of the site. Further investigations were commissioned by the builder. They identified that the piling may extend to 12.5m deep at places. During the piling of the site there was a very unusual situation where the piling depths suddenly dropped from 6 to 7m deep into a very deep hole at over 22 to 24m deep and even deeper in places.

We have never experienced anything like this in the 15 years I have been piling. This is a very unusual situation, but illustrates the potential risk.

Do not accept the risk

As a piling contractor I will not enter into a fixed price contract as it is impossible to know exactly what is under the ground. As a builder you should not accept that risk either.



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