Tui Glen Picnic Table & Shelter construction RETROSPECTIVE REPORT
CR Ken Turner

Summary

This is a “Workaround” gone wrong.

I regularly hear the term ‘workaround’ spoken in the corridors of Council, the meaning is claimed to imply efficient navigation of Council processes and protocols, when in reality it is corporate cover for frustrated individuals under pressure to deliver project outcomes trying to find the path of least resistance through Council works programs to achieve practical outcomes.

This is a retrospective case study of exactly that dynamic.

The ‘Henderson-Massey Local Board Shade and Shelter provision assessment June 2021’ was adopted on 20 July 2021. Specific reference to Tui Glen picnic tables and shelter structures appears in the Quarterly Reports’ work program attachments, within line items covering other small infrastructure capital spend over the following years, starting in February 2022. In some cases, these line items are tagged as ‘Risk Adjusted Projects’, meaning they are constantly exposed to changing scheduling parameters due to other budgetary concerns.
This project was tendered in late 2024, awarded in February 2025, and construction started in 2026.

There's the first problem, with five years to deliver two simple Park furniture amenities, each valued at a few tens of thousands of dollars. (I'm still waiting for a reply to my formal request for costings.)

This extraordinarily extended timeframe results in a loss of project continuity, with a stop-start, sawtooth delivery timeline. This is exacerbated by;

- too many Council procedures and protocols
- too many Council departments involved
- too many Council people involved
- the weighting of this failure sits firmly with Council, with little or none on the contractors.

How the shelter substitution moved through compliance, procurement, and delivery is not clearly explained. CF approved one shelter, and procurement delivered another, with engineering due diligence applied retrospectively. The structure itself may well be sound, but because required inspections were never carried out at the right stages, no engineer will sign it off retrospectively, leaving council to demolish rather than certify something it can no longer prove.

1.0 Overall Summary

The project's core failure was that construction proceeded before the engineering, foundation, consent, and compliance requirements of the selected shelter system had been fully understood, documented, and approved.

This is because someone decided to substitute a different shelter design after all documentation had gone through a tender process and the contract had been awarded.

The design of the foundation (piles) was not included in the original construction drawings

That's because the original construction had been designed (approved???) With a smaller shelter structure, for which the pad alone was a sufficient foundation.

and when they were only later added (by hand – see Appendix A) this correction was not passed on to the contractor until after GBN had laid the slab, and they had been questioned by the frame manufacturer that piles were required.

I suggest the amended plans, with the additional hand drawn foundation specifications, were done after the larger shelter structure turned up on site and contractors and council staff understandably questioned if the pad alone was a suitable foundation,

Retrospectively piles were then installed and the frame erected. The concrete 'cover' was then required to be relaid as the inconsistencies in the newly installed piles gave a poor aesthetic finish.

So, the basis of Council's complaint was cosmetic.

This design and planning failure triggered a series of downstream issues, including retrospective foundation work, non-compliant construction, repeated remediation attempts, additional costs and reconstruction of completed works.

2.0 Background

The project was tendered in late 2024 and awarded in February 2025.

During procurement, an alternative shelter solution was proposed in place of the originally specified shelter. The alternative structure was supplied by a specialist manufacturer and supported by separate engineering design documentation, producer statements and foundation requirements. This distinction is significant because responsibility for understanding and implementing the requirements of the selected shelter system extended beyond the original tender documentation. Once an alternative structure was nominated, supplied and installed, the associated engineering, foundation and construction requirements became critical considerations for project delivery.

So, Auckland Council Full Facilities (CF) staff had,

- identified the need for ageing structures to be replaced,
- developed designs and plans, and estimated costs,
- socialised the project with the local board and obtained their approval to allocate the estimated funds from any budget.

Then CF delivered their approved plans and specifications to the Procurement Department for them to buy the goods, services and work required for the project, in short, manage the Tender process. BUT THEY DECIDED TO REDESIGN THE PLANS and specs?

3.0 Sequence of Events

The chronology of events appears clear:

1.0 The concrete slabs were constructed **before** the foundation requirements for the selected shelter system were fully understood or incorporated into the works.

Someone took it upon himself to change the shelter structure design and supplier outside the project process.

2.0 Subsequently, questions were raised regarding whether the required pile foundations had been installed. Project records indicate that awareness of the pile requirements emerged only **after** construction of the slabs had already commenced or been completed.

Because someone decided to deliver a different shelter structure to what was designed (approved???) on the plans.

3.0 As a result, pile reinforcement cages were procured **after** slab construction, and openings were cut into the newly completed slabs to allow pile installation retrospectively.

4.0 This sequence suggests shortcomings in planning, design review and construction sequencing. Had the engineering requirements been fully understood **prior to construction**, the piles would ordinarily have been installed before the slabs were constructed.

This doesn't make sense, and raises the question: did this project go through a building consent application, and was a building consent issued?

5.0 Following installation of the shelters, concerns were raised regarding whether the foundations complied with the engineering requirements and design specifications. Project records repeatedly refer to the foundations as being inadequate or inconsistent with the documented requirements. **We are unable to confirm whether the foundations are adequately installed to conform to the structural calculations.**

And this is the real reason the new concrete pad was broken up and removed. When the more robust foundations were retrospectively installed by cutting holes in the pad, no inspection took place. Subsequently, no one would sign off the foundations because they couldn't be inspected.

I was told that the pad was removed to remedy structurally unsound foundations, and once that was finished, the shelter structure would be placed back on the new foundations. But again, the reality on the ground was different. The shelter structure was left standing on the foundations.

I understand that, as it is now possible to inspect the foundations of the first structure and it can be assumed that the second structure has been constructed in the same way. Therefore, the second structure's concrete pad may no longer need to be removed.

5.0 A number of remedial measures were subsequently undertaken, including:

- Cutting and patching around the foundations.
- Concrete grinding.
- Acid washing.
- Installation of an additional concrete overlay.
- Demolition and reconstruction of affected slabs.

Each remediation attempt was considered unsatisfactory by AC, resulting in the decision to remove and replace the affected slabs – this has been partially completed (LHS only – RHS remains to be completed.

I have been told repeatedly the contractor is doing the required retrospective work free of charge to meet council's goals.

What contractor would do free remedial work in these circumstances?

4.0 Assessment of Key Issues

4.1 Original Drawings and Foundation Requirements

It is noted that pile foundations did not appear on any earlier design documentation. However, this observation has limited relevance once an alternative shelter system was adopted.

The shelter installed was not the structure originally specified. The alternative shelter was supported by its own engineering design and foundation requirements. Consequently, the critical issue is not whether piles appeared on earlier drawings, but whether the engineering requirements of the final installed design were fully understood and incorporated before construction commenced.

This paragraph is totally contradictory to the rest of the report, including its own summary, which treats the hand amended drawing that added piles as the critical triggering event of the entire cause of the cascading events. So it can't be both irrelevant and the pivotal moment.

This paragraph tries to dodge the real story! Which is, shelter substitution during procurement is what set the whole cascade of events off.

Who did this? What department? What authority?

8.0 Conclusion

The evidence suggests that the engineering requirements of the selected shelter system were not fully understood or implemented prior to construction. This resulted in foundation-related compliance concerns, retrospective remedial works and eventual reconstruction of completed elements.

At the same time, governance, consent management and project oversight processes appear to have been inadequate to ensure that design substitutions, approvals, documentation and compliance obligations were effectively managed.

In summary, the available evidence indicates failures in both project delivery and project governance. Construction proceeded without all engineering and consent requirements being fully resolved, while oversight mechanisms did not adequately identify, manage or mitigate the resulting risks before significant works had been completed.

This illustrates a totally ad hoc set of disjunctive actions, which council would not accept from the private sector, a stop works order would be issued.

This report uses broad language, "governance weaknesses," "insufficient oversight," and "documentation management," which frames this as processes failing, as if no one was driving and therefore not a people problem. And that's exactly what it is, council people did not do or follow due diligence.

10.0 Recommendations

- *Checklist of requirements for all projects*
- *Involve PSO more to get advice on any building/structure related matters (BC/RC/Heritage)*
- *If uncertain - cross check with contractors to ensure they are LBP, have a relative experience in this type of construction, strong understanding of the requirements of constructing a structure and have done their due diligence prior to commencing work, they should also check we (AC) have done our due diligence*

You have got to be joking! This makes me fear nothing has been learnt from this situation.

All the broad language, "governance weaknesses," "insufficient oversight," and "documentation management," frames this as processes failing, as if no one was driving, and therefore not a people problem.

Yet Auckland Council is quick to divert future responsibility to the only people doing the work: the contractors. The contract must check we (Auckland Council) are doing our due diligence. Society has put all this crap in place to make sure contractors do their job properly, and when all this bureaucratic overhead fails, the contractors should have checked that Council was performing properly ……YEAH RIGHT

- *Strong processes for all projects which direct Project Managers toward information and resources to avoid missing steps.*
- *Professional development to ensure full competency of PMs with rigorous examination of qualifications and knowledge through relevant professional bodies.*

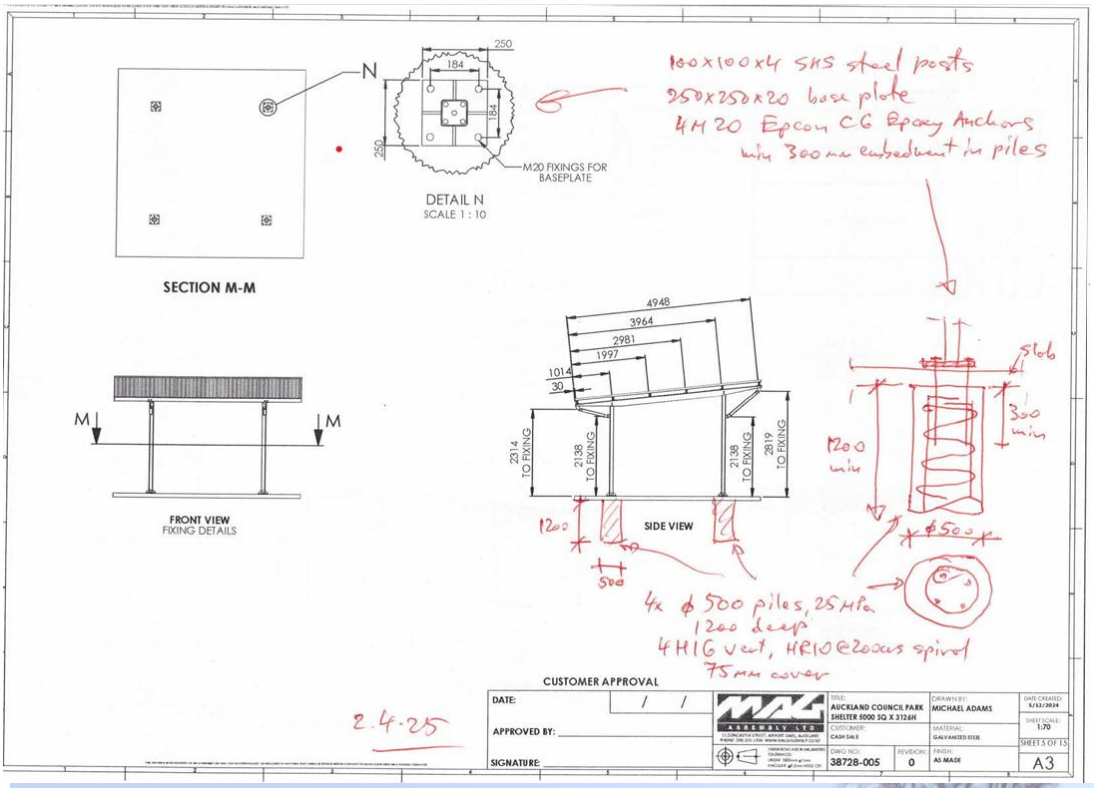
We need less process, not more.

- *Note: The shelter manufacturer is a sign manufacturer and correct/'tried and tested' suppliers to be used for future shelter installations which should ideally be consistent across the region 'by design'.*

What happened to all the approved supplier criteria? What about councils' approved supplier list, the Audit and Risk Committee, and the Risk and Assurance Team, who are supposed to be managing our reputation, for which council spends millions on annually? Who chose the supplier(s), and were they all on councils' approved supplier list?

11.0 Further action

- Regularise Building Consent, Resource Consent (Heritage), Watercare Approvals.
- Complete RHS shelter with snagging (attached report).
- Complete landscaping.


100x100x4 SHS steel posts
250x250x20 base plate
4 M20 Epcon CG Epoxy Anchors
min 300 mm embedment in piles
250
184
184
250
N
M20 FIXINGS FOR BASEPLATE
DETAIL N
SCALE 1 : 10
SECTION M-M
M
M
FRONT VIEW
FIXING DETAILS
4948
3964
2981
1997
1014
30
2314 TO FIXING
2138 TO FIXING
2138 TO FIXING
2819 TO FIXING
1200
500
SIDE VIEW
516
300 min
1200 min
ϕ500
4x ϕ500 piles, 25MPa
1200 deep
4H16 vert, HR10@200cs spiral
75mm cover
CUSTOMER APPROVAL
DATE: / /
APPROVED BY:
SIGNATURE:
2.4.25
WAC ASSEMBLY LTD
TITLE: AUCKLAND COUNCIL PARK SHELTER 5000 SQ X 3124H
CUSTOMER: CASH SALE
DRAWN BY: MICHAEL ADAMS
DATE CREATED: 5/12/2024
SHEET SCALE: 1:70
MATERIAL: GALVANIZED STEEL
SHEET 5 OF 13
DWG NO: 38728-005
REVISION: 0
FINISH: AS MADE
A3

And so much for the Mayor's standardisation policy

Tui Glen West Auckland

August 2026

Knightsbridge Reserve North Shore

August 2026