



Home buyers are at a disadvantage because in San Antonio they sign a real estate contract knowing little about the home they are about to purchase. They rely on experts to guide them through the process of evaluating the home for defects. But one of the most important aspects of the home is **poorly understood** by most – damage to the home's concrete slab foundation and any repair that was performed.

As with most products and services, **you get what you pay for**. If you want a quick and cheap foundation repair job then there are plenty of contractors willing to provide you with this service. These low quality repair jobs experience frequent failure due to their **inherent disadvantages**. You can read more about **Common Foundation Problems** with Texas homes at the prior link.

On the other hand, if you want the **highest quality of foundation repair available** then you should ask for the Bell Bottom Pier method. What makes this method the highest quality? First, it is **proven and time-tested**. This method, generically known as the drilled pier method, was developed in Texas about 100 years ago. It is the primary construction method used to build support columns for highway overpasses and bridges. It is simple but elegant – a hole is dug into the ground until stable



soil is reached. Then

The photo above shows the bottom of the building and the broken concrete pilings jutting out from the base.

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concrete and steel rebar are placed into the hole. And second, **this method is permanent**. The Bell Bottom Piers will outlive the house.

Foundation Repair Based on Hope

Yes, hope. We are referring to the **most common** [foundation repair in San Antonio](#) **method** utilized in Texas – stacked concrete cylinders known as **the Pushed Pile method**. ***It is a method that is fast, cheap, and based on hope.*** It is based on hope because everybody – the repair contractor, the home seller, the real estate agent, and the home inspector – are hoping that the pushed piles were pushed into the ground in a straight vertical column. Nobody really knows. It is a **“hit or miss”** method – hoping everything is correct. It is well known by the repair contractors that these pushed piles can skew or angle off in any direction. When that happens the column offers virtually no support. A failed column means the foundation does not have the required support and will continue to settle. A failed column will cause excessive weight to be borne by the neighboring columns – a recipe for additional settlement. Re-leveling the house every year is not a solution because the support column(s) of pushed piles has failed.

As a home buyer do you want to buy a home with a repaired foundation that is inherently flawed. The structural engineers at A-1 Engineering are very critical of the pushed pile method of foundation repair – **“mostly useless and almost completely a waste of your money.”** They state that **sooner or later these repair jobs will fail**. That is why we have written this page – “Home Buyers Beware”. Structural Engineers are familiar with real estate inspections and are the experts regarding evaluations of concrete slab foundations. They fully understand the pros and cons of each repair method. And they understand the allowable tolerances. Call a structural engineer and ask him/her about **the factor of safety** of pushed piles and the fact that pushed piles **do not act monolithically** (performing as single unit).

Sellers and Realtors

Sellers and Realtors have **different motivations** than a home buyer. They want to sell the home as quickly as possible with as few expenses as possible. When a foundation problem is discovered before a home sale, **the quickest and cheapest repair method is selected by the seller 99% of the time**. We have seen this scenario thousands of times. After the home is sold the low quality repair job will usually fail before the new buyer decides to sell the home.

Remember, if you purchase a home and then sell it some years later you must disclose **all known defects**. That includes **multiple “re-levels” of a failed foundation repair job**. A new buyer or mortgage lender will usually reject a home with this problem.

Negotiate the Price

If you are considering purchasing a home that has received a low quality foundation repair job then you have an **excellent negotiating tool** available. You can point out to the seller that the low quality repair will more than likely fail in a few years. Then you will then have to hire a new contractor to provide a permanent solution.

Before you purchase a home call us for complete foundation inspection and evaluation. We offer formal inspections for home buyers with diagrams, recommendations, and price/repair estimates.

A low quality foundation repair job has ***the potential to cost the home buyer far more*** than the price of the job. There are critical relationships that must be considered. For example, if a home is re-leveled will it create a large under slab void in the interior of the home? Is so, will it be ignored by the contractor or will the contractor attempt to support the home's interior slab? Will the contractor install interior support columns and / or mud-pump to fill the voids? If the interior of the home is not properly supported then there is **the potential of “sag” or settlement** – which is expensive to remediate.

Another critical relationship is the waste water or sewer line component of the house. After job completion did the contractor perform **a hydrostatic test on the sewer lines** to confirm there are no breaks in the sewer lines? If not, any significant water leakage under the slab foundation could cause compaction and other significant problems / damage to the foundation.

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San Antonio Texas 78251

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