



1 April 2026

Mr. Roy Eden
City of Orlando Building Official
400 South Orange Avenue
Orlando, FL 32801

Project 260409 – Structural and Geotechnical Investigation, The Rialto Apartments
Building, 7343 Sand Lake Road, Orlando, FL

Dear Mr. Eden:

In the early hours of 19 March 2026 at the Rialto Apartment Building (Rialto), one or more residents reported hearing a loud “popping” noise in unit 545. The resident(s) subsequently found their unit entrance door jammed and could not be opened. The Orlando Fire Department responded to a resident’s emergency call and determined that other doors in the 45 and 47 apartment stacks were also jammed. As a result of these observations, the Orlando Fire Department ordered the evacuation of the entire building.

Mid-morning on 19 March 2026, Simpson Gumpertz & Heger Inc. (SGH) was hired on behalf of the building owner, Northland Rialto LLC, to investigate the cause of this event. We arrived at The Rialto on the afternoon of that same day to begin our investigation into the cause(s) of the reported conditions. We observed cracks in the drywall of Stacks 45 and 47, along with jamming doors and floors that sloped toward the shared bearing wall between the 45 and 47 units. Our initial observations indicated that a portion of the building had likely been displaced or otherwise moved downward.

This letter summarizes our current findings from our investigation and provides an overview of our planned next steps.

We reviewed original construction documents describing the building construction. The structural drawings indicate that the structure consists of parallel-chord wood trusses at the roof and at each floor, which are supported by conventional wood-framed bearing walls. The wood-framed bearing walls are supported on the ground-level concrete slab. The ground-level concrete slab is 4 in. thick with post-tensioned reinforcement and thickened, conventionally reinforced haunches that create strip footings below the bearing and non-bearing walls.

We observed a gap between the soil and the ground-level slab that extends underneath the load-bearing wall footing between Stacks 45 and 47. The gap is approximately 3 ft deep and 15 ft in diameter. At this time, we believe the lack of soil support below the slab-on-grade between Stacks 45 and 47 resulted in downward displacement or other downward movement of the slab and wall.

As a result of the gap below the slab-on-grade, SGH conducted a thorough inspection of the remainder of the building and found numerous locations with gaps between the concrete slab and the underlying soil that range from 0.5 in. to 4 in. There are no indications of gaps below the slab of a similar size to the one observed below the 45 and 47 stacks. We are in the process of developing a floor plan that details the approximate size and extent of these gaps. We will issue the floor plan once it is completed.

The current priority is installing temporary shoring supports below the ground-level slab in the 45/47 stack. We are actively working with contractors to implement this temporary shoring.

We will also conduct a subsurface investigation within and around the building to determine the cause of the gaps and the potential for future gaps to develop. This will include performing soil borings around the building perimeter and performing cone penetration test soundings within and around the building. Geophysical surveys may also be performed. The anticipated duration of this work is uncertain but may exceed sixty days, depending on the contractor's availability to mobilize on site and the time required to process laboratory samples.

The building is currently safe for worker access, and there is no concern regarding imminent failure of the structure. However, the building is not suited for continuous resident occupancy while investigation and eventual remedial activities are underway in areas where residency would happen. Access at this time should be limited to personnel involved in the investigation and remedial or repair activities, and those gathering the residents' possessions and property. Engineers, investigators, and contractors utilizing appropriate safety equipment are inside the building performing the building investigation and removing residents' possessions and property. We will continue to provide updates on when residents may safely return to the building or to parts of it.

This investigation is still ongoing, and these findings are subject to change.

Sincerely yours,



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