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Section 1:

FLORIDA BUILDING CODE AND PRODUCT APPROVAL

FLORIDA BUILDING CODE

Stemming from the severe hurricane damage experienced throughout Florida in the 1990's, a single building code for Florida was adopted in 2002. The *Florida Building Code* is based on national model building codes and standards but has been tailored to meet Florida's specific needs, particularly in the areas of wind and water impacts. Since March 2002, the *Florida Building Code* supersedes all local building codes.

The *Florida Building Code* is a compendium of seven main volumes: Building, Plumbing, Mechanical, Fuel Gas, Existing Building, Residential and Test Protocols for High-Velocity Hurricane Zones. The code in its entirety can be found at www.floridabuilding.org.

It is updated every three years but can be amended annually to incorporate interpretations and clarifications.

Changes to historic structures must meet the requirements contained in the Existing Building volume. For the purposes of the *Florida Building Code*, a historic building is defined in Section 1102, *Florida Building Code* Existing Building as a structure that is:

- Individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places, or
- A contributing property in a National Register listed historic district, or
- Designated as an individual or contributing historic property by a local, state or special district, or
- Determined to be eligible by the State Historic Preservation Officer for listing in the National Register.

Figure on page 5 (General Overview of Requirements) provides an overview of the primary building code requirements for existing buildings in terms of disaster preparedness. As shown in that figure, code requirements are different for repairs versus alterations. Additionally, the requirements also change for alterations to existing buildings depending on where the building is geographically located within the state. Buildings located in a windborne debris region have to meet additional glazing protection requirements, while buildings in the High Velocity Hurricane Zone (basically Miami-Dade and Broward Counties) must also comply with the more stringent requirements.

Chapter 11 of the Existing Building volume focuses directly on historic structures. This chapter is very important because it provides flexibility to historic buildings when meeting code requirements, in recognition of the need to preserve the character of these buildings. In particular, as shown in figure on page 6 (Overview of Goals, Objectives and Options), it affords the opportunity to use an equivalent system method or device to meet code requirements, if the local building official accepts it. It also allows three options for code compliance - non-historic existing buildings are limited to only two options.

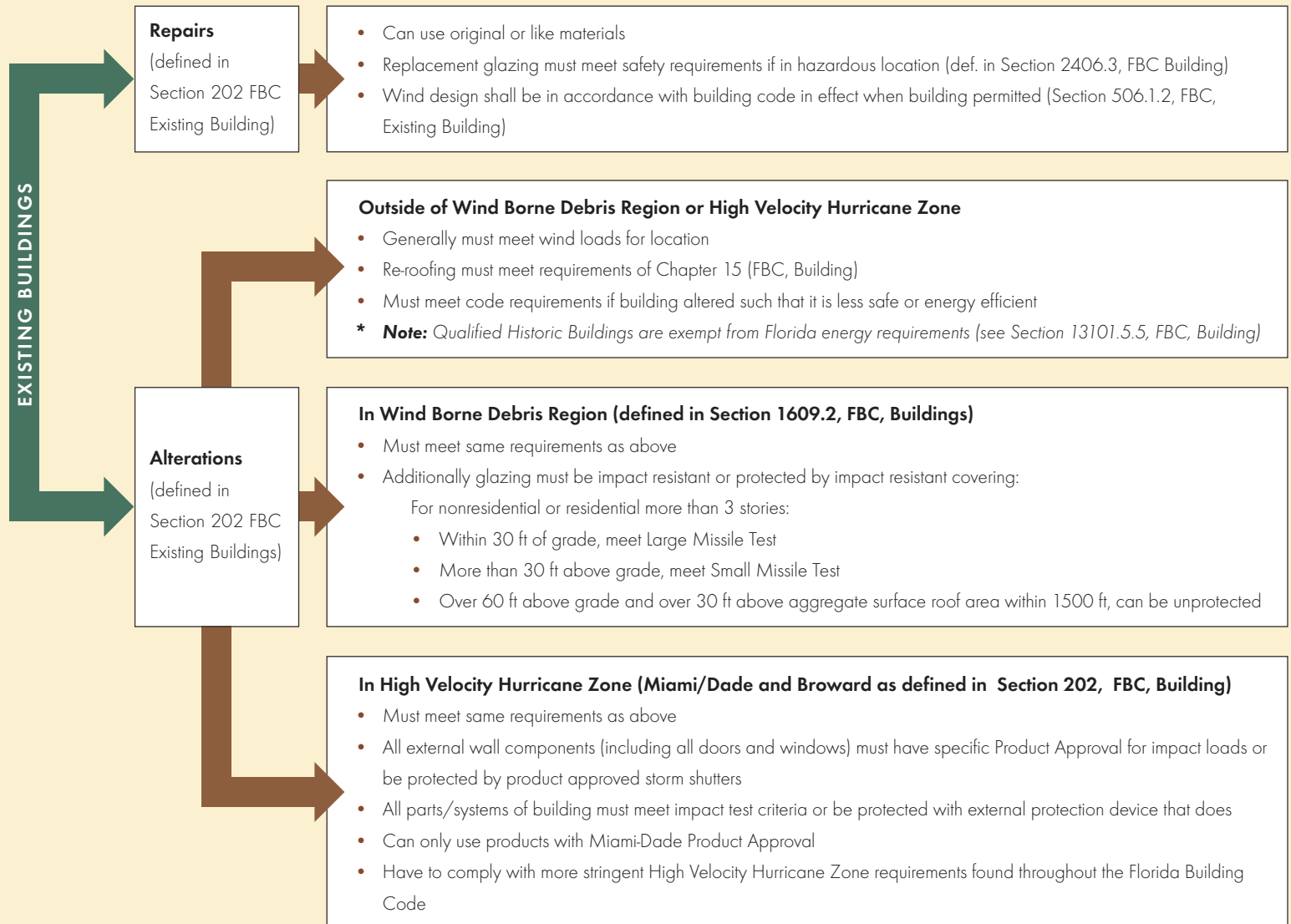
To ensure that the full range of flexibility is applied to work done on an historic building, it is

vital to involve an architect with experience dealing with historic buildings and the *Florida Building Code*. The overall goal embodied within Chapter 11 is to continue to maintain and preserve the original space configurations of historic buildings, as well as minimizing the alteration, destruction or loss of historic fabric or design of the structure. Creativity is often required to achieve that goal and meet code requirements.

Florida Building Code (FBC), Existing Building

GENERAL OVERVIEW OF REQUIREMENTS

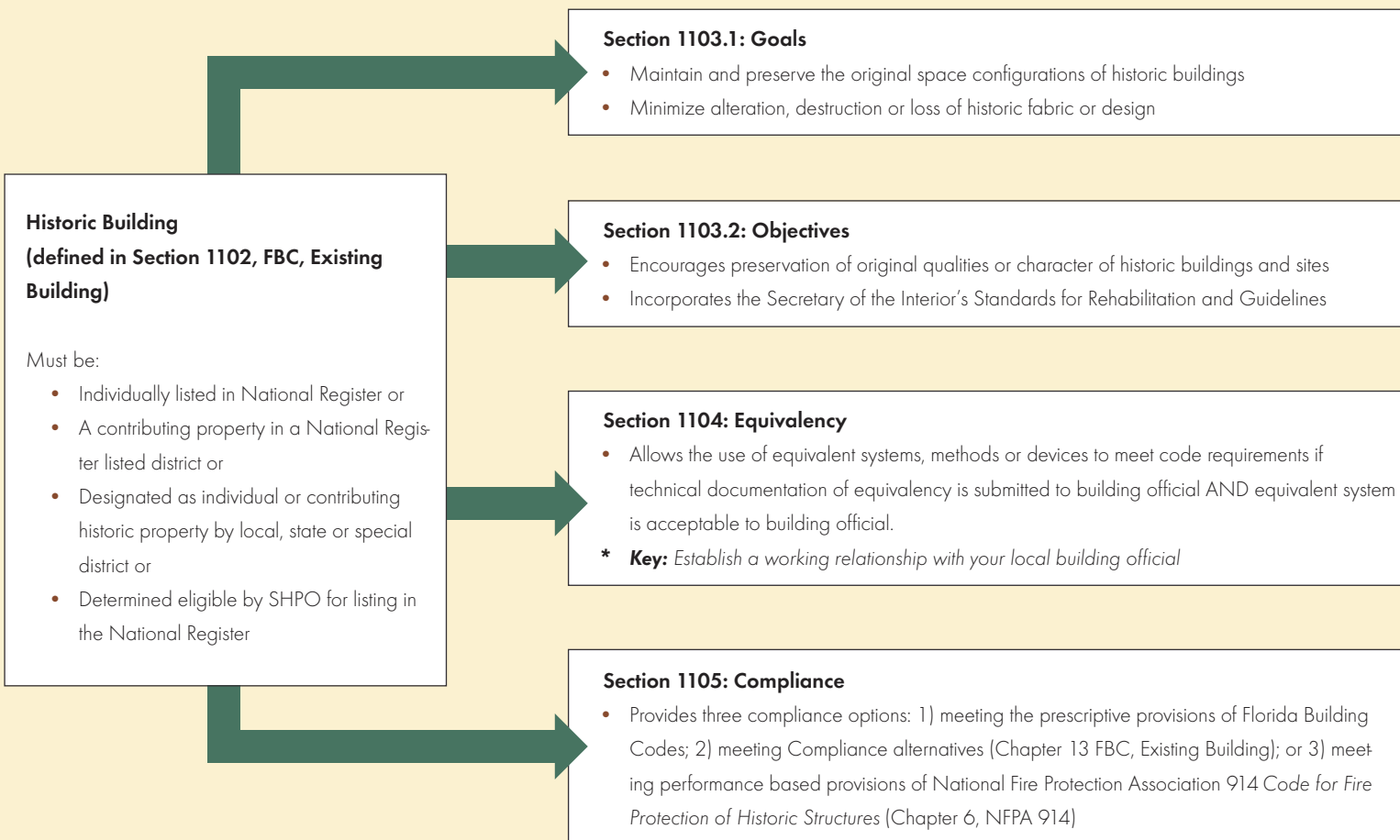
(Please refer to Florida Building Code, Existing Buildings, for specific requirements)



Flexibility Afforded to Historic Buildings

OVERVIEW OF GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND OPTIONS

(Please refer directly to Florida Building Code for specific requirements)



PRODUCT APPROVAL

When researching products to help protect a historic structure from potential damage, you want to make sure that the product will meet code requirements. The products that you may be allowed to use vary based on a building's geographic location. If the property is in Miami-Dade County or Broward County, the product must have Miami-Dade approval or have been approved by the Florida Building Commission for use in a High Velocity Hurricane Zone. In all other areas of the state, a product must simply be approved by the Florida Building Commission.

Both the Florida Building Commission and Miami-Dade Building Code Compliance maintain online data bases related to products that have been approved as meeting the code standards. The Florida Building Commission database is available at www.floridabuilding.org. Products in seven major categories can be submitted for approval: panel walls, exterior doors, roofing products, skylights, windows, shutters, and structural components. The Product Approval Program Oversight Committee (POC) meets on a monthly basis to review and make recommendations regarding approval of new products or applications.

On the Florida Building Commission website, you can search by a number of different parameters including the manufacturer's name or the category of the product (i.e., shutters, roofing, windows etc.) You can also search for products that have been approved for use in the High Velocity Hurricane Zone, are impact resistant or meet a specific design pressure. "Product Approval" means that the product is approved for use in accordance with the stated terms of approval and limitations of use. That approval is valid until the product changes in a way to decrease performance, or the approval is suspended, revoked, or superseded by a revision to the approval.

Products that carry Miami-Dade approval can be accessed at www.miamidade.gov/buildingcode/. The Miami-Dade Building Code Compliance Office is responsible for the product control approval process. Staff reviews the applications and determines if the submittal is sufficient to determine compliance with building code requirements. The final approval determination is made by the Miami-Dade Board of Rules and Appeals. If approved, a Notice of Acceptance (NOA) is issued which constitutes the official approval document and outlines the conditions and limitations under which the approval was given. The approval date and expiration date are shown on the first sheet of the NOA.

As with the Florida Building Commission website, a variety of search parameters can be used to research products. You can search geographically by high velocity hurricane zone or non-high velocity zone. You can also search by the applicant, manufacturer, category (e.g. shutters, roofing), sub category (e.g. bahama shutters or asphalt shingles) or by a specific material. The listings under each of these options tend to be more extensive than in the Florida Building Commission database.

While both databases are easy to access and use, it may take a few search requests to get a

feel for how different categories of products are listed. The two databases are not consistent in terms of the search parameters so you may need to explore each database to get the search results that you are seeking. It is very important that you look at the approval certificate itself for each product that you are considering. Just because a product is "approved" doesn't mean that it will be appropriate for use in every case. Every product is tested based on a specific set of application assumptions related to design pressure, installation methodology, product construction and materials. The product is only approved for use consistent with those testing parameters. Thus you need to review the conditions of approval to determine if they meet your situation, particularly in terms of the design pressure used in the test. If they do not, either another product whose testing is consistent with your specific needs should be found or consideration to pursue additional testing could occur.