

City of Ruston, Louisiana

Sec. 29-45. HDD historic downtown district.

The historic downtown district is intended to be a predominantly pedestrian area with shops and storefronts close to the road, with wide walkways and on-street parking. The historic downtown district is the heart of Ruston culturally, geographically and historically. It lends the city its small-town feel, scale and architecture. The history of the area is retained with the preservation of historic structures and the common Main Street theme enhanced by the character of the signs and the store front awnings. This area is defined as that business district bordered by Florida Avenue on the north, Bonner Street on the east, Texas Avenue on the south and Monroe Street on the west. Uses include a diversity of specialty shops, retail businesses, service providers, recreational activities and public functions in the downtown area.

(a) *Ruston Historic District Advisory Commission.* There is hereby created a Ruston Historic District Advisory Commission, which shall serve without compensation in an advisory capacity to the zoning commission. The Ruston Historic District Advisory Commission shall review and make recommendations to the zoning commission on all conditional uses within the boundaries of the HDD Historic Downtown District. The Ruston Historic District Advisory Commission shall also make recommendations to property owners upon all proposed alterations or relocations within the boundaries of the historic district and shall assist property owners interested in pursuing investment tax credits for historic rehabilitation to meet the requirements for that program.

(b) *Members.* The Ruston Historic District Advisory Commission shall be appointed by the mayor of the city. All members of the Ruston Historic District Advisory Commission shall be specially qualified, by reason of training or experience in architecture, land development, city planning, real estate, landscape architecture or other relevant business or professional training or experience or by reason of civic interest and sound judgment, to judge the effects of a proposed building or structure upon the context of neighboring buildings and the surrounding area. The Ruston Historic District Advisory Commission may solicit such additional professional advice as it deems appropriate.

(c) *Criteria.* In making recommendations, the Ruston Historic District Advisory Commission shall consider the following:

- (1) To the extent feasible with economic realities, efforts should be encouraged to provide compatible uses for buildings requiring minimal building, building site and environmental alteration.
- (2) Removal, destruction or alteration of original characteristics or unique architectural features of buildings should be discouraged.
- (3) Surface cleaning of structures by the gentlest means possible should be encouraged.
- (4) In a rehabilitation project, use of materials matching or compatible with those already used in the building as to composition, design, color, texture and other visual qualities should be encouraged.
- (5) Contemporary design and alterations and additions to existing building should not be discouraged when such alterations and additions do not destroy significant historical, architectural or cultural material and such design is compatible in size, scale, material and character to the property, neighborhood and environment.

(6) In the case of new construction compatibility with surrounding buildings in scale, size, and materials should be encouraged.

(d) *Principal permitted uses.* Principal permitted uses within the HDD Historical Downtown District include uses of Louisiana Tech University and of the City of Ruston. Site plan review and a conditional use permit are not required for principal permitted uses as listed in this section, except that an infrastructure meeting with city departments is required.

(e) *Procedures.*

(1) *Notification to Ruston Historic District Advisory Commission.* When application for a building permit for any alteration, demolition, relocation or new construction in the Ruston Historic District, other than principal permitted uses, is made, the building inspector shall notify the Ruston Historic District Advisory Commission and make available to it a copy of all required application materials submitted. No extra copies shall be required of any applicant for this purpose.

(2) *Conditional uses.* All conditional uses require a conditional use permit and review by the Ruston Historic District Advisory Commission, in the manner provided in section 29-12.

(3) *Demolition of historic building.* Whenever a property owner shows that a building classified as historic and located in the historic downtown district is incapable of earning any economic return on its value, as appraised by a qualified real estate appraiser, or if new construction can be demonstrated by a property owner to be the highest and best use of the building site, such building may be demolished, provided, however, that before a demolition permit is issued, notice of proposed demolition shall be given three times, during a period of 30 days to afford the city, interested persons, historical societies, or organizations the opportunity to acquire or to arrange for the preservation of such building, though the owner has no obligation whatsoever to the Ruston Historic District Advisory Commission after said 30-day period. The Ruston Historic District Advisory Commission shall publish said notices in the newspaper and shall pay for same.

(4) *Alterations.* When application for a regular building permit for any alteration in the Ruston Historic District is made, the building inspector shall notify the Ruston Historic District Advisory Commission and make available to it a copy of all required application materials submitted. No extra copies shall be required of any applicant for this purpose. The commission shall be allowed to meet with the applicant within ten days at a time and place acceptable to applicant to explain its recommendations on rehabilitation plans. If such a meeting cannot be scheduled for any reason, the commission can alternatively send a written, nonbinding proposal or recommendation to applicant. The major focus of any recommendations for change or endorsement of plans as presented shall be to help property owners to avoid any action which might tend to impede present or future federal tax benefits arising from location in the historic district. No special building permit or any other permit or application to the Ruston Historic District Advisory Commission shall be required for any reason, and no regular building permit shall be denied or refused after said ten-day period because of any action or inaction of the Ruston Historic District Advisory Commission.

(f) *Conditional uses:* The following uses are conditional uses:

- (1) Artist's studio and galleries
- (2) Bakery, confectionery sales
- (3) Banks, savings and loans

- (4) Churches and other places of worship
 - (5) Clothing stores
 - (6) Commercial printing
 - (7) Day care services
 - (8) Dry goods and variety
 - (9) Offices
 - (10) Parking lots
 - (11) Personal service establishments
 - (12) Plant nurseries
 - (13) Public safety facilities
 - (14) Public utility facilities
 - (15) Recreation facilities
 - (16) Restaurants: 2,000 sq. ft. or less -- with drive up services
 - (17) Restaurants: 2,001 sq. ft. or more -- without drive up services
 - (18) Retail sales
- (g) *Prohibited uses:* The following uses are not permitted:
- (1) Car washes
 - (2) Gambling or gaming outlets
 - (3) Inside commercial storage facilities
 - (4) Kennels
 - (5) Medical, infectious, pathological, or general waste incinerator
 - (6) Mobile homes, camps and trailer parks
 - (7) Motels (not to include hotels and conference centers)
 - (8) Outside car sales or rentals
 - (9) Outside gas service stations, fuel dealers
 - (10) Outside storage
 - (11) Pawnshops
 - (12) Residential duplexes
 - (13) Sexually oriented businesses
 - (14) Single-family uses
 - (15) Strip retail centers with front yard parking fields
- (h) *Development standards.*
- (1) The floor area ratio [F.A.R.] of all buildings on a lot may be 1.00.
 - (2) No building or structure shall exceed a height of 60 feet.
 - (3) The minimum setbacks shall be as follows:
 - a. There is no minimum front setback.
 - b. There is no minimum side setback.
 - c. There is no minimum rear setback.
 - (4) Flat roofed buildings can be built in the DHH.
 - (5) Lighting. All exterior lighting shall be directed and hooded to eliminate bleed-over into the adjacent properties.
 - (6) No off street parking is required in the DHH except that residential development requires one space per unit.
 - (7) Second story residential development is considered a complementary use and encouraged.

(Ord. No. 1465, § 1, 6-6-2005; Ord. No. 1488, § 35, 5-1-2006; Ord. No. 1514, § 22, 12-4-2006; Ord. No. 1549, § 2, 12-3-2007)
 Secs. 29-46--29-49. Reserved