

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Ruston State Bank (1910) is a two-story, masonry structure decorated in the Beaux Arts style. It is located near the center of a party-wall block and faces a busy thoroughfare in downtown Ruston. Significant alterations include the loss of most of the interior and a 1955 expansion which took in a former store connecting to the bank on its north side. It is for its intact original Beaux Arts facade that the bank is being nominated to the National Register.

This stone facade is the decorative highlight of the building. Its major feature is an entrance which combines the idea of a Roman triumphal arch with that of a classical temple front. Elements of the Beaux Arts found here include 1) a flamboyant and over-large coffered barrel vault which breaks through the entablature above it, 2) two sets of monumental paired pilasters 3) the presence of a watertable which makes the building appear to stand upon a pedestal, 4) the use of sculpted elements (in this case anthemions) to enliven the roofline , and 5) the existence of excessive sculpted decoration in the spandrels of the arch and the tympanum of the pediment. This teas relief decoration consists of flowers and cartouches cast in an organic manner vaguely suggesting the influence of the Art Nouveau style. In addition to its Beaux Arts elements, the facade also displays a number of classical motifs. These include 1) Ionic capitals composed of scrolls and anthemions, 2) a pediment highlighted by a modillion band outlining its cornice, 3) a dentil band outlining the entablature, and 4) a second set of paired pilasters rising above and behind the pediment. The other walls of the structure (where visible above their party wall connections) are composed of brick laid in a simple common bond pattern.

In addition to the changes and additions described above, the bank has experienced the following alterations: 1) the 1927 installation of a clock on the facade, 2) replacement of windows and exterior doors, and 3) the covering of several openings on the rear elevation. The 1910 interior was destroyed by fire and no part remains. Almost all of a 1924 interior which replaced the earlier features was remodeled in conjunction with the 1955 expansion. Only a set of teas relief classical panels depicting griffins remains from the 1924 version. None of these changes is significant enough to seriously challenge the integrity of the building. The elaborately articulated facade remains virtually intact, the current openings are the same size and shape as the originals, and the exterior of the 1955 addition has been faced in stone in a style compatible with that of the original bank building. The clock is itself a historic addition and does not detract from the facade. The building is clearly recognizable as the structure erected by the Ruston State Bank in 1910 and is a landmark in Ruston's Central Business District. As such, it retains its National Register eligibility.

Significant dates	1910
Architect/Builder	unknown
Criterion C	

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Ruston State Bank is locally significant in the area of architecture because it is a landmark among the early twentieth century buildings of downtown Ruston. It is also the only example of the Beaux Arts style within the community's Central Business District.

Although Ruston was founded in 1883, most of the buildings in its commercial district date from the early twentieth century. With the exception of a few late Italianate style business houses, the city's French style Federal Building, a late Gothic Revival style church, and two structures in the

Moderne style, most of these buildings are block-like one and two story party-wall structures of plain utilitarian design. Many are distinguished by nothing more than slightly corbelled cornices. Against this background, the monumental Ruston State Bank stands as a visual landmark. With its set of paired monumental pilasters, its coffered barrel vault, and its highly articulated pediment and tympanum, the bank is clearly the most elaborately styled structure in the downtown area. Thus, it is a strong candidate for National Register listing.

Historical Note

The Ruston State Bank was founded in 1890. Although the downtown branch bank moved to a new building sometime after 1976, the 1910 Beaux Arts branch still functions as the bank's Trust and Financial Services Center.

Major Bibliographical References

Fletcher, Mary Frances, and Ropp, Ralph L., eds. Lincoln Parish History, Marceline, Mo.: Walsworth Publishing Company, 1976.

History of Ruston State Bank, typescript. Copy in National Register file.

Windshield survey of Ruston Central Business District.