

Chapter 16.1

HISTORIC DISTRICT*

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***Editor's note**—Ord. No. 31-1986, §§ 1—20, adopted Oct. 27, 1986, amended Ch. 16.1, historical district in its entirety, and such provisions have been designated herein as §§ 16.1-1—16.1-3, 16.1-6—16.1-21, 16.1-28—16.1-16.1-32, 16.1-36—16.1-41. For the specific derivation of each section, see the history note following such section or the Code Comparative Table beginning on page 2353. Prior to such amendment, former Ch. 16.1, substantive sections thereof being §§ 16.1-1—16.1-14, 16.1-21—16.1-25, was derived from Ord. No. 1-1978, §§ 1—18, adopted Jan. 23, 1978; Ord. No. 28-1978, §§ A—C, adopted June 26, 1978; Ord. No. 10-1979, § C, adopted Apr. 9, 1979; Ord. No. 32-1981, § A, adopted Sept. 28, 1981; and Ord. No. 30-1984, § 1, adopted July 9, 1984.

Cross references—Department of inspections and planning, § 2-38 et seq.; building and building regulations, Ch. 8; electricity, Ch. 12; parking of certain vehicles during Christmas Festival, § 21-76 et seq.; planning, Ch. 24; streets, sidewalks and public places, Ch. 28; zoning, App. B.

ARTICLE I. IN GENERAL

Sec. 16.1-1. Definition of historic district.

(a) The Historic District of the City of Natchitoches shall include the area recognized as a national landmark, as well as an area lying outside of the national landmark, which areas are more fully defined in the following two (2) paragraphs. The Natchitoches Historic District shall be comprised of both areas.

(b) The following area of the City of Natchitoches is hereby designated as the "Natchitoches Historic District, A National Landmark":

Beginning at the corner of Texas and Washington Streets in the City and Parish of Natchitoches, Louisiana, and thence running southerly along Washington Street to its intersection with Pavie Street and thence running westerly along Pavie Street to Third Street; thence southerly along Third Street to Church Street; thence westerly along Church Street to its intersection with Fourth Street; thence southerly along Fourth Street to its intersection with Amulet Street; thence easterly along Amulet Street to New Second Street; thence southerly along New Second Street to its intersection with College Avenue; thence easterly along College Avenue to a point where College Avenue as extended would intersect Cane River Lake; thence up Cane River Lake in a northerly direction to the downtown bridge and thence easterly along the downtown bridge to its intersection with Williams Avenue; thence northerly along Williams Avenue to a point where Texas Street, if extended, would intersect Williams Avenue; thence westerly across Cane River to the point of beginning. The historic district above designated shall include all building sites or lots and all structures, houses, or other buildings facing any of the streets on the perimeter of the area.

(c) The following areas of the City of Natchitoches are hereby designated as the "Local Natchitoches Historic District," being that area of the historic district outside of the landmark district:

(1) Beginning at the corner of Keyser Avenue and Williams Avenue in the City and

Parish of Natchitoches, Louisiana, and thence northerly along Williams Avenue to its intersection with the downtown or Church Street bridge; thence westerly across the downtown or Church Street bridge to its intersection with Cane River Lake; thence southerly along Cane River Lake to its intersection with the wooden bridge; thence easterly along the wooden bridge and Keyser Avenue to its intersection with Williams Avenue, the point of beginning. The historic district above designated shall include all building sites or lots and all structures, houses, or other buildings facing any of the streets on the perimeter of the area.

(2) Beginning at corner of Third Street and Buard Street in the City and Parish of Natchitoches, Louisiana, and thence running westerly along Buard Street to its intersection with Fifth Street; thence southerly along Fifth Street to its intersection with Lafayette Street; thence westerly along Lafayette Street to its intersection with Sixth Street; thence southerly along the right-of-way of Sixth Street to its intersection with St. Denis Street; thence westerly along the right-of-way of St. Denis Street to its intersection with the right-of-way of the Texas and Pacific Railroad; thence southerly along the right-of-way of the Texas and Pacific Railroad to its intersection with Trudeau Street; thence easterly along Trudeau Street to its intersection with Fifth Street; thence southerly along Fifth Street to its intersection with Toulain Street; thence easterly along Toulain Street to its intersection with Fourth Street; thence northerly along Fourth Street to its intersection with Church Street; thence easterly along Church Street to its intersection with Third Street; thence northerly along Third Street to its intersection with Buard Street, the point of beginning. The historic district above designated shall include all building sites or lots and all structures, houses, or other buildings facing any of the streets on the perimeter of the area.

(Ord. No. 31-1986, § 7, 10-27-86; Ord. No. 50-2003, § 1, 8-25-03)

Sec. 16.1-2. Prevalence of chapter in case of conflict.

The provisions of this chapter shall govern and take precedence over any other provisions of any ordinance or codes of the City of Natchitoches. (Ord. No. 31-1986, § 14, 10-27-86)

Sec. 16.1-3. Penalties for violations.

Any owner, agent, lessee or other person acting for or in conjunction with him, who shall violate the Natchitoches Historic District Ordinance or law or rules, regulations or decisions of the commission, shall be fined not less than fifty dollars (\$50.00) nor more than one hundred dollars (\$100.00) for each infraction. Each day that a violation continues shall constitute a separate offense. (Ord. No. 31-1986, § 12, 10-27-86)

Sec. 16.1-4. Open glass containers.

(a) For the purposes of this section an "opened glass container" is any bottle, drinking vessel, container, or receptacle used for the purpose of carrying liquid substances which is not mechanically sealed.

(b) It shall be unlawful for any person to carry or have in his possession any open glass container upon the public streets, sidewalks, alleys, parks, or other public property situated within the Natchitoches Historic District as defined in section 16.1-1 of this Code.

(c) It shall be unlawful for any person to drink from any opened glass container upon the public streets, sidewalks, alleys, parks, or other public property situated within the Natchitoches Historic District as defined in section 16.1-1 of this Code.

(d) Each owner of every establishment selling beverages in glass containers in the historic district, including special event proprietors, shall post in their establishment, in full public view, at least two (2) copies of Ordinance No. 08 of 1999, or a notice similar to the following:

CITY ORDINANCE FORBIDS THE CARRYING OF, OR DRINKING FROM, OPENED GLASS CONTAINERS ON THE STREETS,

SIDEWALKS, OR PARKS WITHIN THE HISTORIC DISTRICT OF THE CITY OF NATCHITOCHE

(e) Any person found guilty of violating this section shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor and shall be punished by a fine of not more than two hundred fifty dollars (\$250.00), or by imprisonment for not more than seven (7) days, or both. Each day any violation of this section shall continue shall constitute a separate offense. (Ord. No. 08-1999, § A, 3-8-99)

Editor's note—Ord. No. 08-1999, § A, adopted Mar 8, 1999, pertained to glass containers in the historic district. Such provisions did not specify manner of codification; hence, inclusion herein as § 16.1-4 was at the editor's discretion.

Secs. 16.1-5—16.1-10. Reserved.

ARTICLE II. ADMINISTRATION

DIVISION 1. GENERALLY

Secs. 16.1-11—16.1-15. Reserved.

DIVISION 2. COMMISSION

Sec. 16.1-16. Established.

There is hereby created a commission to be known as the historic district commission of the city of Natchitoches. (Ord. No. 31-1986, § 1, 10-27-86)

Sec. 16.1-17. Purpose.

The Natchitoches Historic District Commission shall have for its purpose the preservation of all structures in the historic district section of the city which have architectural and historical value and which should be preserved for the benefit of the people of the city and state. (Ord. No. 31-1986, § 6, 10-27-86)

Sec. 16.1-18. Membership, appointment.

The commission shall consist of seven (7) members, all of whom shall reside in the city, and shall be appointed by the mayor. (Ord. No. 31-1986, § 2, 10-27-86)

Sec. 16.1-19. Terms; vacancies; selection of chairman.

Each of the members of the commission shall be appointed for a term of four (4) years. The chairman shall be elected by the members of the commission. Whenever the term of a member of the commission expires, the mayor shall appoint his successor. The members may serve consecutive terms.

(Ord. No. 31-1986, § 3, 10-27-86)

Sec. 16.1-20. Organization and operation.

The director of the community affairs department of the city will serve as advisor to the commission and will act as liaison between the commission and the office of the mayor. Nominal expenses necessary to carry out the duties of the commission will be budgeted through the community affairs department. The recording secretary for the commission will be designated by the director and all files and records of the commission will be maintained by the community affairs department. The city attorney shall be the ex officio attorney for the commission. The commission may designate and appoint, from among its members, various committees with such powers and duties as the commission may have and prescribe.

(Ord. No. 31-1986, § 4, 10-27-86)

Sec. 16.1-21. Duties; meetings; reports; rules, regulations and guidelines.

The commission shall make such rules and regulations as it may deem advisable and necessary for the conduct of its affairs not inconsistent with the laws of the city and state. The commission shall meet monthly, but meetings may be held at any time by the commission on the written request of any of the seven (7) members or on the call of the chairman of the commission or the mayor. The commission shall make quarterly reports to the mayor and council containing a statement of its activities. Copies of the rules, regulations and guidelines are available at the historic district commission office.

(Ord. No. 31-1986, § 5, 10-27-86)

Secs. 16.1-22—16.1-25. Reserved.

DIVISION 3. PERMITS AND ENFORCEMENT

Sec. 16.1-26. Permit required, when.

The owner of any property within the historic district shall apply for a permit from the commission before the commencement of any work in:

- (1) The erection of any new building or other construction in the Natchitoches Historic District; or
- (2) The alteration or addition to any existing structure in the Natchitoches Historic District; or
- (3) The painting, repainting, repairing or demolishing of any existing building situated within the Natchitoches Historic District.

(Ord. No. 31-1986, § 8(a), 10-27-86)

Sec. 16.1-27. Application; plans and specifications required.

The application for a permit shall be made to the commission, accompanied by the full plans and specifications so far as they relate to the proposed appearance, color, texture or materials and architectural design of the exterior, including the front, sides, rear and roof of such buildings, alteration or addition of any building or outbuilding, party wall, courtyard, sidewalk, driveway, parking area, fence or other dependency thereof.

(Ord. No. 31-1986, § 8(b), 10-27-86)

Sec. 16.1-28. Considerations for variance or modification.

Where, by reason of topographical conditions, irregularly shaped lots, or because of unusual circumstances applicable solely to the particular applicant, strict enforcement of the provisions of this chapter would result in serious undue hardship peculiarly affecting said applicant, then the commission, in passing upon his application, shall have the power to vary or modify adherence to this chapter provided always that its requirements ensure harmony with the general purposes hereof, and will not adversely affect the historic district as a whole.

(Ord. No. 31-1986, § 8(c), 10-27-86)

Sec. 16.1-29. Commission recommendation and action.

The Natchitoches Historic District Commission shall, upon due consideration, render its decision concerning the approval or disapproval of the issuance of the permit, which may include such changes, if any, as in its judgment are reasonably necessary to comply with the requirements of this chapter, and send its decision, in writing, to the applicant and the building inspector. If the permit is approved, the building inspector shall issue promptly a permit for such work in conformance with the commission's decision.
(Ord. No. 31-1986, § 9, 10-27-86)

Sec. 16.1-30. Appeals.

(a) Any person or persons aggrieved by any decision, act or proceeding of the Natchitoches Historic District Commission shall have a right to apply in writing to the city council for reversal or modification thereof; and the mayor, or presiding officer of the city council, shall have the right to stay all further action until the city council shall have had an opportunity to rule thereon. Any such appeal shall be taken in ten (10) days from date of the written decision, and the city council may consider said appeal at its next general or special meeting, but, in any event, not more than forty-five (45) days thereafter. The city council may affirm a decision of the Natchitoches Historic District Commission by majority vote of all its members. The city council shall have the right to reverse, change or modify any decision of the Natchitoches Historic District Commission by majority vote of all its members.

(b) Any person or persons aggrieved by any decision of the city council affecting said historic district shall have the right to file a civil suit within thirty (30) days from date of decision in a court of competent jurisdiction under the usual rules of procedure governing same, with the right to stay order and injunctive relief provided the situation warrants it.
(Ord. No. 31-1986, § 10, 10-27-86)

Sec. 16.1-31. Injunction to prevent or remedy violation.

Whenever any person has engaged in or is about to engage in any act or practice which

constitutes or will constitute a violation of this chapter, the commission may make application to the appropriate court for an order enjoining such act or practice, or requiring such person to refrain from such prospective violation or to remedy such violation by restoring the affected property to its previous condition. Upon a showing by the commission or the city that such person has engaged or is about to engage in such act or practice, a permanent or temporary injunction, temporary restraining order, or other appropriate order shall be granted without bond.
(Ord. No. 31-1986, § 11, 10-27-86)

Sec. 16.1-32. Stopping work which violates permit requirements.

The building inspector shall promptly stop any work attempted to be done without or contrary to a permit issued under this chapter and shall promptly prosecute any person responsible for such a violation of this chapter or engaged in such violation. Any officer or authorized agent of the commission shall exercise concurrent or independent powers with the building inspector in prosecuting violations of this chapter and stopping work attempted to be done without or contrary to the permits required by the chapter.
(Ord. No. 31-1986, § 13, 10-27-86)

Secs. 16.1-33—16.1-35. Reserved.

ARTICLE III. BUILDING REGULATIONS

Sec. 16.1-36. Guidelines.

(a) *Generally.* The Natchitoches Historic District Commission shall follow the guidelines established by the United States Department of the Interior in considering all proposals for new construction and/or rehabilitation.

(b) *New construction.* Proposals for new construction in the Natchitoches Historic District should seek compatibility with existing structures through the appropriate use of site planning, aeriels, decorative details, architectural elements, and scale. A proposal should not draw unnecessary attention to itself in any one of these

characteristics. However, a proposal need not duplicate or copy historic styles and periods. The architectural context is of primary concern.

- (1) *Scale.* The relationship of the building and its elements (including doors and windows) to other structures in the district.

It is important in considering scale, that a careful study be made of the height, width, and mass of buildings in the immediate neighborhood and district as a whole. This study should serve to confirm or deny the appropriateness of the height, width, and mass of the proposed building.

Maximum height of any new structure shall conform to U.S. Department of Interior guidelines for Historic Districts. In no case shall a new structure exceed a height of seventy-five (75) feet above the street.

- (2) *Siting:* The positioning of a building on a lot. This process includes determining the setback of a building, the spacing of this building from adjacent buildings, and the location of the walls, fences, walks, drives, and landscaping, if any of these are used in the overall design.
- (3) *Materials:* The surface building fabric which contributes to the exterior character and appearance of a building.
- (4) *Decorative details.* Ornamentation or embellishment. These include cornices, lintels, arches, balustrades, chimneys, shutters, columns, and other common details. When used, details should create a unifying effect on a building and should be compatible with the context of the neighborhood.
- (5) *Architectural elements.* Parts of a building that are integral to its composition. These include balconies, roofs, porches, chimneys, dormers, parapets, and other parts of a building that contribute to its overall shape and silhouette. The choice and arrangement of elements of a proposed building should reflect those of other buildings in the neighborhood. The building should not draw unnecessary attention to itself by failing to relate to neighboring styles, but

neither should it necessarily copy these styles. The objective is to compliment the context of the Natchitoches Historic District.

(Ord. No. 31-1986, § 15, 10-27-86)

Sec. 16.1-37. Fences.

Fence design must be in harmony with the nature of the district.

- (1) The following fencing materials are generally acceptable: Iron picket, ornamental cast iron, brick, concrete block with cement-plaster coating, combinations of iron and masonry, wood picket either flat boards or square, solid wood either flat-topped or capped.
- (2) The following fencing materials are not acceptable: Barbed wire, chain-link, concrete block, stockade, plywood, hardboard, or asbestos board.

(Ord. No. 31-1986, § 16, 10-27-86)

Sec. 16.1-38. Floodlights.

The Natchitoches Historic Landmarks District shall not be illuminated by privately controlled floodlights or other illumination except as approved by the historic district commission or as permitted specifically by this chapter.

(Ord. No. 31-1986, § 17, 10-27-86)

Sec. 16.1-39. Overhanging balconies.

No overhanging balconies or galleries of wrought or cast iron may be removed, but other new or additional balconies may be erected if they conform to the quaint and distinctive architecture of the Natchitoches Historic District. The permit for all such new construction or any renovation shall be subject to the requirements of this chapter.

(Ord. No. 31-1986, § 18, 10-27-86)

Sec. 16.1-40. Signs.

(a) *Definitions.* The following terms, as used in this section, are hereby defined as follows:

- (1) "Sign" shall include any symbol, device, image, poster, flag, banner, billboard, design or directional sign used for advertising purposes, whether painted upon, attached

to, erected on, or otherwise maintained on any premises containing any words, letters or parts of letters, figures, numerals, phrases, sentences, emblems, devices, trade names or trade marks by which anything is made known, such as are used to designate an individual, a firm, an association, a corporation, a profession, a business or a commodity or product, which is visible from any public street and is used to attract attention.

- (2) "Display" includes erect, paint, repaint, place, replace, hang, rehang, repair, maintain, paint directly upon a building or other structure, inlay, imbed in, or otherwise exhibit in public view.

(b) *Signs must conform to character of district.* In addition to the prohibitions contained in this section, approval of the display of a sign in the Natchitoches Historic District of the city shall be granted by the commission only when such signs and the plans therefor, so far as they relate to the appearance, color, size, position, method of attachment, texture of materials and design, conform to the quaint and distinctive character of the Natchitoches Historic District or do not injuriously affect it or impair the value to the community of those buildings having architectural or historical worth.

(c) *No signs to be displayed in certain places.* No sign shall be displayed from the parapet or roofs of any buildings in the historic district. No sign shall be displayed or placed in any manner whatsoever so as to disfigure or conceal any significant architectural feature or detail of any building.

(d) *What signs may advertise.* No sign of any character shall be displayed in the Natchitoches Historic District unless such sign advertises a bona fide business conducted in or on the premises and, if it does do so, not exceeding fifty (50) percent of the area of such sign may be used to advertise products or commodities actually sold on the premises.

(e) *Number of primary signs.* In general, one (1) primary sign is allowed to each store, shop, or

bona fide place of business, and this sign shall be no larger than the maximum stipulated in this section.

- (1) In the case of a business operated on a corner lot that faces two (2) streets, one (1) permanent sign on each street facing is allowed and shall be regulated as if each side were a separate storefront.
- (2) In the case of a single sign being inappropriate, multiple permanent signs may be used, the total face area of which may not exceed the maximum size stipulated in this section.

(f) *Surface area of signs.* The surface area of any sign shall be in direct proportion to the amount of front footage of each ownership and shall be as follows:

- (1) For single-faced signs, attached flat against the wall and including painted wall signs there shall be allowed thirty (30) square inch sign surface area to each foot of lot frontage.
- (2) For double-faced signs, suspended by brackets or arms perpendicularly from the wall of a building, the surface area shall be the sum of the areas of each face not to exceed thirty (30) square inches of sign surface area to each foot of lot frontage.
- (3) In the case of multiple businesses operating at a single location, the total face area of signage may be increased to one and one-half (1½) times the maximum stipulated in this section.

(g) *Secondary signs.* In addition to the primary sign(s) referred to in paragraph (e), small secondary signs may be used to identify the following:

- (1) Entrance doors;
- (2) Operating hours;
- (3) Historically significant locations;

(h) *Temporary signs.* Temporary signs of a promotional nature may be placed on the interior of store windows. In no case may they remain longer than sixty (60) days. A permit is not required for

the placement of a temporary sign. Temporary signs may be placed on the exterior of a building for the following special situations:

- (1) For the identity of real estate for sale.
- (2) For political advertisement; except for signs larger than a two foot by two foot (2' x 2') yard sign, no application is required.
- (3) For promotion by nonprofit organizations.

In no case may these signs exceed the size limitations of this section.

(i) *Portable and changeable letter signs.* No portable or changeable letter signs may be erected or allowed to remain within the Natchitoches Historic District.

(j) *Illuminated signs.* No illuminated signs may be constructed or erected within the Natchitoches Historic District without the express approval of the historic district commission.

- (1) Concealed lighting is recommended. Bulbs may not be exposed. The light should enhance the sign as well as the building on which it is mounted.
- (2) Internally illuminated signs are not permitted.
- (3) Neon signs are not permitted.
- (4) Flashing signs are not permitted.

(k) *Signs no longer complying as to advertisements to be taken down.* Any sign displayed which no longer advertises a bona fide business conducted upon the premises shall, upon notification by the Natchitoches Historic District Commission or its agent (who is hereby specifically authorized to so proceed) be taken down, removed or obliterated within five (5) days after such notification and failure to so comply on the part of the owner, occupant, agent or person having the beneficial use of any building or premises upon which such sign may be found shall subject such person to the penalty provided in section 16.1-3.

(l) *Building code applicable to signs.* All signs under this section shall be further governed by the existing regulations of the building code of the city which are not in conflict with this section.

(m) *Application for signs to be submitted to commission.* All applications for permits to display signs within the historic district of the city shall be submitted to the historic district commission office for approval before a permit therefor may be issued in conformity with section 16.1-29.

(n) *Form of application to display signs; accompanying drawings.* Application for a permit to display signs in the historic district of the city shall be made to the commission upon forms furnished by the commission. Such an application shall also be accompanied by sketches and drawings in triplicate showing details of construction and foundation when required by the building code of the city and shall delineate the size, shape, design, coloring, lighting, and position in relation to the building from or upon which it shall be displayed.

(Ord. No. 31-1986, § 19, 10-27-86)

Sec. 16.1-41. Aerials, antennas, etc., prohibited.

The construction of aerials, antennas, or satellite dishes of any type within the Natchitoches Historic District is prohibited without the express approval of the Natchitoches Historic District Commission.

(Ord. No. 31-1986, § 20, 10-27-86)