

HISTORIC RESOURCES

Identifying, recognizing, preserving, rehabilitating, maintaining, and treasuring the City's historic resources creates an awareness and appreciation for Brea's heritage. Our past tells us who we are, and buildings, structures, and places of the past reinforce for each new generation of Breans the importance of studying and valuing the community's cultural and physical foundations.

Context

Brea contains a rich history, celebrated through events that took place at original sites and structures that exist today. Brea's history includes a time period when sheep ranching, oil extraction, and citrus production each represented the economic underpinning of the Southern California region. The remaining homes, commercial buildings, parks, and oil production facilities are just some of the historic resources that help define and enhance the community's character. Public awareness of these historic resources has led to the development of programs to aid in their preservation and restoration. To protect Brea's heritage, the community will continue to identify and safeguard resources worthy of such treatment, and ensure that new development enhances rather than alters reminders of early Brea.

Early Brea History

The properties comprising Brea were once part of the large land holdings of the San Gabriel Mission that was established in 1771 by the Franciscan Padres. The mission land stretched along the coastal areas of California from San Diego to Monterey. Vast herds of Mexican cattle pastured on all the land in and surrounding Brea during the Mission and Rancho periods. In 1863, thousands of acres of Rancho lands, including Brea, were acquired by Abel Stearns, a Los Angeles businessman who later leased much of his land to sheep ranchers.

Beneath the hills in Brea lie what was once one of the world's richest deposits of oil. The Puente Hills and Brea Canyon supported substantial petroleum production during the late 1800s. By 1895, the Puente Hills Oil Company, started by William Lacy and W.R. Roland, had approximately 30 oil wells in the Puente Hills producing 700 barrels of oil a day. Union Oil Company was also lured by the riches of Brea and began purchasing land for oil production and leasing it out to other oil companies. The hillsides were covered with wooden oil derricks and oil production machinery.

The first real village in Brea was called Olinda, originally sited where Carbon Canyon Regional Park lies. Olinda, literally surrounded by hundreds of oil wells, was the workplace for many of the oil field workers. The village contained a church, barbershop, livery stable, boarding house, dance hall, pump house, Santa Fe Freight Depot, a school, and an oil storage tank.

In July 4, 1910, the Pacific Electric Railway connected Brea to La Habra, Whittier, and other Los Angeles communities. The official founding date for the town of Brea is January 19, 1911, with incorporation in 1917 with a population of 732. Many of the buildings of the original town were situated on Pomona Avenue (current day Brea Boulevard). As a booming oil town, the City's population began to grow rapidly. Development of new housing, businesses, and civic buildings began to shape current day Brea.



The Craig building, completed in 1921, housed many important functions upstairs on the second floor. Brea's post office and drugstore occupied the first floor. The building was located on the east side of Pomona Avenue (Brea Boulevard) just north of Birch Street.

Following the big oil boom, land in and around the City began transforming from sheep ranches to orange groves. The Bastanchury Ranch Company in La Habra, Fullerton, and Brea was said to have the largest citrus groves in the world, which included over 5,350 acres of orange groves during the 1920s. Union Oil Company also realized the potential of turning over underutilized properties to citrus production.

Post-World War II saw an increase in development. Many citrus groves were plowed under and the land subdivided for greater profits. Brea also saw major development in the manufacturing

and industrial businesses. With Union Oil Company still a major employer in the City, many oil-related companies moved to Brea. In 1972, the SR-57 freeway made agricultural lands and oil lands surrounding Brea accessible to even more growth. Five years later, the Brea Mall opened, providing economic growth for the City while supplying retail opportunities for Breans and the region.

Preservation Efforts

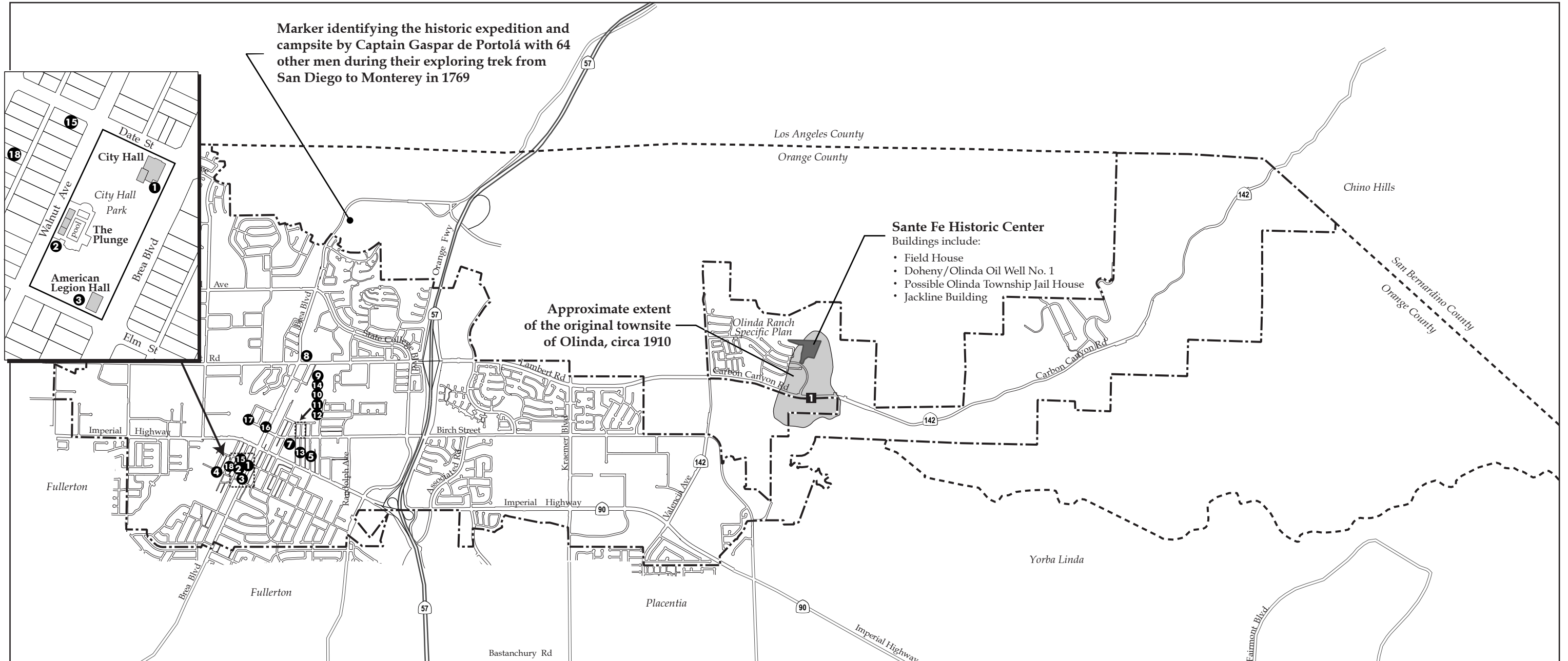
In 1989, the City Council adopted Resolution No. 89-125 establishing the Historical Committee. The Committee was subsequently eliminated in 1995 as it was only established as a temporary committee. The purpose of the Committee was to increase a level of awareness of Brea's historical resources by establishing goals and policies to guide preservation. A key tool adopted toward this end was the 1994 Historic Preservation Ordinance, designed to promote the historic, cultural, educational, economic, and general welfare through a number of specified objectives.

The Historic Preservation Ordinance establishes the Historic Resources Register and describes the procedures for designation and/or removal of individual historic resources. Identifying sites and structures with historical significance protects these resources from potential destruction and creates added awareness of historic resources that residents may not know exist. The Planning Commission is responsible for establishing and maintaining the Register, with input from the Historical Society. Structures and/or sites listed in the Register are eligible for a variety of preservation incentives provided by the City and various other State and local agencies. Figure CR-6 identifies key historic resources, and Table CR-2 identifies location, construction date, and a brief description for each.

Many homes within Brea's southwest residential neighborhoods date to the early twentieth century and display unique architectural qualities. A historic district represents one possible approach to preserving the integrity not just of individual structures but of blocks and neighborhoods.

Brea Historical Society

Founded in 1971, the Brea Historical Society collects and preserves the City's historical materials and resources. This organization meets regularly and provides ongoing display, including historic oil equipment outside of the old City Hall. The collections include a large inventory of historic black-and-white photographs of Brea and residents.



Source: Brea Historic Resources Register, 1994; National Register of Historic Places, 2001; and State of California Register of Historic Resources, 2001; Olinda Heights Specific Plan, 2000. □

Legend

- City Boundary
- Sphere of Influence
- ▨ Potential Historic District(s)
- Approximate extent of the original townsite of Olinda, circa 1910

City of Brea Historic Resources

- 1 Old City Hall
- 2 Brea Plunge
- 3 Old American Legion Hall
- 4 Pioneer Hall
- 5 Practice House
- 7 Laurel Elementary School
- 8 Brea Junior High School
- 9 Dr. Walter W. Davis House
- 10 Edgar Jamison House
- 11 Roy Mitchel House
- 12 William Casner House
- 13 Charles C. Kinsler House
- 14 Howard Waggener House
- 15 Frank Woodard House

- 16 The "Brea Welcomes You" Sign
- 17 Good Old Brea Clock
- 18 Luther Cox House

National Register of Historic Places

- 1 Old City Hall
- 2 Brea Plunge
- 3 Old American Legion Hall

State of California Register of Historic Resources

- 1 Original Township of Olinda

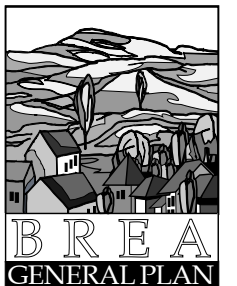
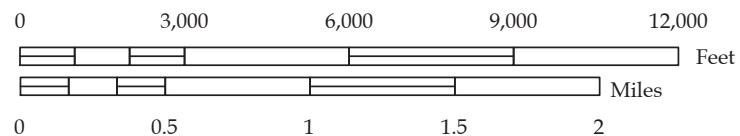
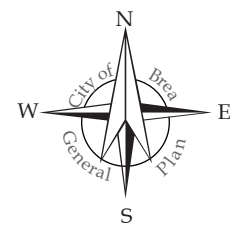


Figure CR-6
Historic Resources

Table CR-2
City of Brea Historic Resources Register

Historic Resource	Current Address	Construction Date	Description
1. Old City Hall	401 S. Brea Blvd.	1928	The structure was the location of Brea's first publicly owned municipal government facility for over 50 years.
2. Brea Plunge	440 S. Walnut Ave.	1929	Brea Plunge has undergone extensive renovation and remains in use today as the oldest continuously operating civic-owned freshwater swimming pool in Orange County.
3. Old American Legion Hall	495 S. Brea Blvd.	1930	During the Great Depression, the Legion could not make their mortgage payments, and the property was then taken over by the City. It became the Brea Police Station and Jail in the early 1970s. Brea Methodist Church started here, and it was used for an emergency ambulance service in the 1990s.
4. Pioneer Hall	330 W. Elm St.	1923	Pioneer Hall started as a Boy Scout clubhouse and later became a meeting hall for the Woman's Club, Junior Women's Club, and the Lion's Club. It still serves the community today as the site of many community activities.
5. Practice House	259 S. Laurel Ave.	1926	This building is unique in that it was possibly the only self-contained home economics lab in Orange County for the old Brea High School.
6. 1923 Seagrave Fire Truck	400 N. Kraemer Blvd. (Temporary)	1923	Today, the fire truck is believed to be one of the oldest fire trucks remaining in Orange County.
7. Laurel Elementary School	200 S. Flower Ave.	1922	Laurel School has been the focus of elementary education in Brea for over half a century and for many decades served as one of the community's first public schools.
8. Brea Junior High School	400 N. Brea Blvd.	1916	Brea Junior High School is a notable example of public architecture with its simplified Spanish Revival style.
9. Dr. Walter W. Davis House	101 S. Redwood ¹	1920	Dr. Davis constructed this structure as his home and office. He served the needs of the Brea community beginning sometime prior to 1914 and continuing into the late 1920s.
10. Edgar Jamison House	107 S. Redwood ¹	1911	The Craftsman construction symbolizes distinctive characteristics of this architectural style and homes of this period in history.
11. Roy H. Mitchell House	114 S. Redwood ¹	1914	The Craftsman construction symbolizes distinctive characteristics of this architectural style and homes of this period in history.
12. William Casner House	121 S. Redwood Blvd.	1915	The house was constructed for the Casner family circa 1915. William Casner was one of the early settlers who came to Brea in 1910. He was responsible for drilling the first oil well on the Amalgamaed Lease. As a member of the Brea Investment Company, he participated in the construction of many City's commercial structures.
13. Charles C. Kinsler House	258 South Redwood Ave.	1912	The original inhabitants of the house were Charles C. and Rena Kinsler when the house was first built in 1912. The house is a small one-story rectangular plan Craftsman Bungalow with a front-facing gable.

**Table CR-2
City of Brea Historic Resources Register**

Historic Resource	Current Address	Construction Date	Description
14. Howard Waggener House	126 South Redwood Ave.	1929	The house is a Provincial Revival residence and is identified with an early time period associated with Brea's local history.
15. Frank Woodard House	401 S. Walnut Ave.	1920	The home is identified as being a part of the Union Oil Company subdivision, which was created to provide housing from company employees. The house is a California Bungalow displaying architectural elements that are not present on other similar homes in the surrounding neighborhood.
16. The "Brea Welcomes You Sign"	101 W. Birch St. ¹	1935	The sign was originally hung over Brea Blvd during a dedication ceremony in 1934. Hanging the sign during the Depression was very symbolic because it showed to everyone in the town and to visitors that despite problems, Brea was doing okay.
17. Good Old Brea Clock	Madrona Ave. and Birch St. ¹	1920	The clock was placed on Brea Blvd in 1975 to advertise a clock shop in the old Brea Hotel building. It supposedly was acquired from an old train station in the Inland Empire, but its origins are uncertain. For years it was known as "Charlie's Clock" because Charlie owned the clock shop. When the clock shop closed, the City purchased the clock since it had become a city landmark.
18. Luther Cox House	258 S. Redwood Ave. ¹	1922	The original inhabitants of the house were Charles C. and Rena Kinsler when the house was first built in 1912. The house is a small one-story rectangular plan Craftsman Bungalow with a front-facing gable.

Source: City of Brea Historic Resources Register

Notes: 1. Structure is not located at the original site where it was constructed.

The Brea Historical Society and City Council recognize residents for renovating and restoring historic structures to reflect their time period with the Brea Historic Preservation Award. This award distinguishes residents' hard work and pride of ownership, which allows for greater historic preservation awareness and acknowledgment.

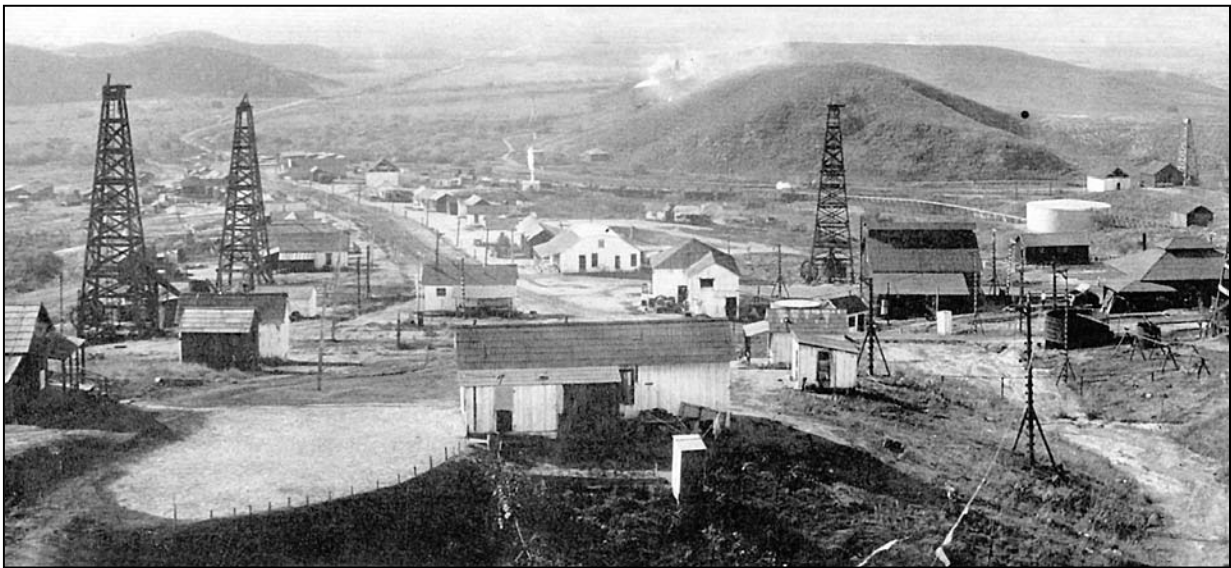
National and State Historic Programs

The National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966 is a federal law that establishes the legal and administrative context to encourage preservation of historic resources. In California, the NHPA is administered by the State Historic Preservation office (SHPO). The NHPA establishes criteria for inclusion into the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The NRHP is an inventory of the United States' historic resources maintained by the National Park Service. The inventory includes buildings, structures, objects, sites, districts, and archeological resources. The listed properties are not necessarily significant nationally, rather most are significant primarily at the State or local level.

Brea City Hall Park is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The park, City Hall, Plunge, and American Legion Building were grouped together under one identification number by the NRHP when it was listed on May 5, 1984.

Properties of historical importance in California are designated as significant resources in three State registration programs: State Historical Landmarks, Points of Historical Interest, and the California Register of Historical Resources. State Historical Landmarks are sites, buildings, features, or events that are of statewide significance and have anthropological, cultural, military, political, architectural, economic, scientific or technical, religious, experimental, or other value.

The original town site of Olinda (Figure CR-6) is listed as number 918 on the State Historical Landmarks, as well as the California Register of Historical Resources. Although many of the original buildings located in Olinda were removed because of flooding from Carbon Canyon headwaters, several existing structures are still present today. They are the Doheny/Olinda Oil Well No. 1, the Jackline Building, an oil production field office, and what could have been the Olinda Township Jail House. These structures were all saved from the original oil operations on the site in the 1890s.



The original town site of Olinda, circa 1910, was made up of small homes and businesses on various oil company properties. Olinda Road (Carbon Canyon Road) can be seen winding east (center) into Carbon Canyon. Today's Carbon Canyon Regional Park takes up most of the flat land on the right side of the picture.

Goals and Policies

Brea's historic resources have value worthy of protection and special treatment and focus. The following goals and policies aim to keep Brea's past alive.

Goal CR-14	Preserve historically significant landmarks and/or sites, individual structures, objects, and neighborhoods, and encourage appropriate rehabilitation.
-------------------	---

Policy CR-14.1 Ensure design compatibility of new development within close proximity to designated historic structures and neighborhoods.

Policy CR-14.2 Create historic districts for areas with a concentration of historically and architecturally significant structures.

Policy CR-14.3 Review all development and rehabilitation proposals affecting historic structures, landmarks, and objects in terms of site design and building design.

Policy CR-14.4 Explore funding resources/alternatives for rehabilitation and restoration of historic structures.

Policy CR-14.5 Encourage the recycling and re-use of existing historic structures through incentive programs.

Policy CR-14.6 Discourage the demolition of structures eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places and/or the State Historic Landmarks, the County, and/or the local historic register.

Policy CR-14.7 Preserve and enhance the City's history and tradition through inclusion of historic sites and other resources in the City's park lands.

Policy CR-14.8 Accommodate heritage elements in recreation programs and events.

Policy CR-14.9 Create park themes based on local history and culture similar to the historic park at Olinda Ranch.

Implementation Guide 

See Section XII in the Implementation Guide.

Goal CR-15 Make all Breans aware of the importance of historic preservation.

Policy CR-15.1 Encourage resident participation in the maintenance of the quality of historic neighborhoods.

Policy CR-15.2 Promote Brea’s cultural and historic resources.

Policy CR-15.3 Encourage public and private participation in the preservation of Brea’s history.

Policy CR-15.4 Incorporate information on Brea’s history as part of the school curriculum to promote pride and appreciation of the City’s heritage.

Policy CR-15.5 Incorporate historic themes and architecture into development and public improvements along South Brea Boulevard to blend with Old City Hall, link Downtown Brea, and add interest and pedestrian orientation to the streetscape.

Policy CR-15.6 Promote Brea’s heritage through artwork, signs, preservation, and historical structures.

Policy CR-15.7 Promote community awareness and understanding of Brea’s history through the Brea Museum and Heritage Center.

Implementation Guide 

See Section XII in the Implementation Guide.