This presentation will walk through Santa Barbara’s recently completed African American Historic Context Statement on how the built history of a community plays a role in helping uplift African-American and Black people today. This is a unique collaboration of social justice leaders and historic preservation specialists in Santa Barbara who worked to compile Santa Barbara’s Black history—one overlooked for decades. The historic context statement examines the history of Santa Barbara’s African-American and Black community through historic buildings. It identifies buildings and sites important to the community that can now be designated and protected as historic resources. The lecture will highlight the many contributions of people of African American and Black people in Santa Barbara, beginning in the Spanish and Mexican periods through the postwar fight for civil rights. Co-presented by Sojourner Kincaid Rolle of Healing Justice SB and Nicole Hernandez, Architectural Historian for the City of Santa Barbara.

Sojourner Kincaid Rolle

During the last three decades, Sojourner Kincaid Rolle has shared her experience, creative ideas, and unique skill set with all segments of the Santa Barbara community. After receiving a degree in Criminal Justice from UNC-Charlotte, she attended law school at UC Berkeley honing her skills in youth advocacy and civil rights. Rolle moved to Santa Barbara in 1985 and spent much of the next two decades working in areas of conflict resolution, mediation and group facilitation. She has worked for the Santa Barbara Rental Housing Mediation Task Force, the Isla Vista Mediation Program, and as the Violence Prevention Educator for the Community Mediation Program. She served on a number of state and local boards including the Santa Barbara County Arts Commission, the Fund for Santa Barbara, Building Bridges, the NAACP, and is a founding Board Member of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Committee. Through her work as Community Outreach Coordinator for the UCSB Center for Black Studies Research and her more recent work with Healing Justice SB, Rolle has been involved in discovering and publicizing the history of Santa Barbara’s African American/Black community.

Nicole Hernandez

Nicole Hernandez is the Architectural Historian at the City of Santa Barbara whose work entails managing the historic preservation work program and oversight of alterations to the City’s historic resources. She has an MFA in Historic Preservation and has worked in Historic Preservation for 22 years starting with non-profit advocacy and in the private sector in masonry restoration then to the public sector as architectural historian in New Orleans, Louisiana. Serving as Architectural Historian in Santa Barbara since 2012, her work ensures projects meet the highest standards of restoration and rehabilitation. Over the past 10 years as Urban Historian in Santa Barbara, she has overseen the local designation of over 300 historic buildings to ensure their continued protection as significant features of the Santa Barbara streetscape. In 2021, she received a grant to hire Page & Turnbull and Healing Justice to create a Historic Context Statement for the African American/Black Community that provides a concise history and identifies historic resources that represent that history.