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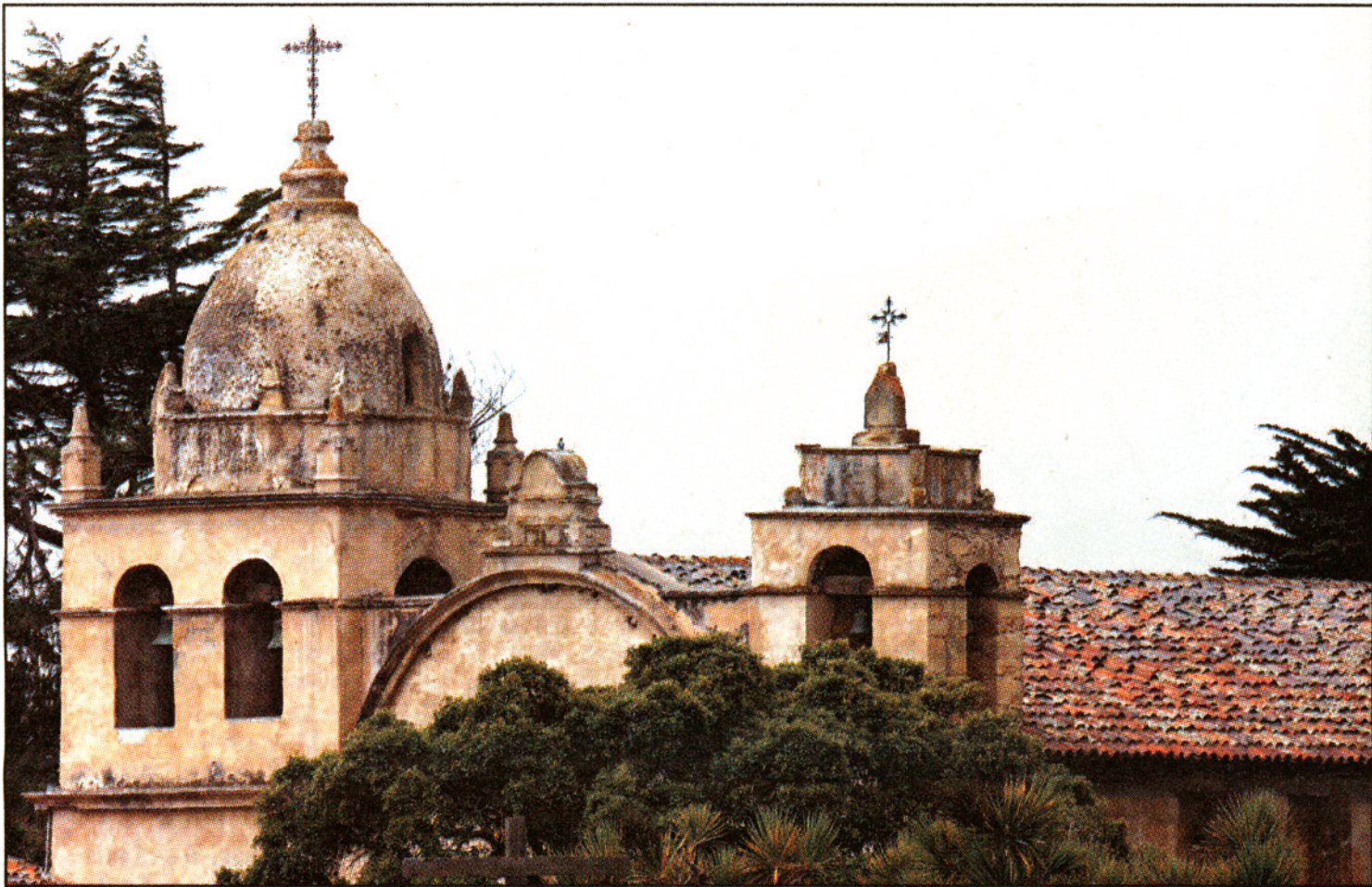
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"This is a huge cultural and economic resource for the Peninsula."

— Carmel Mission Foundation president Samuel Wright



VERN FISHER/The Herald

Carmel Mission Basilica will undergo a major seismic retrofit, scheduled to begin next spring. The Carmel Mission Foundation is raising money for the multimillion-dollar project, and so far has funded \$600,000 of \$700,000 in "soft" costs.

MISSION PRIMED FOR UPGRADE

LAST MAJOR RENOVATION WAS IN 1931

By KEVIN HOWE
Herald Staff Writer

A major seismic retrofit of Carmel Mission Basilica is scheduled to begin next spring, according to the Carmel Mission Foundation, which is raising funds for what is expected to be a multimillion-dollar project.

It's high time, according to foundation general manager Timothy Roehl.

"What would your house's roof be like," he said, "if it hadn't been repaired in 80 years?"

The last major renovation of the mission church took place under the direction of restoration curator Harry Downie in 1931. Downie replaced the pitched roof that had been built in 1883, among other improvements.

Founded in 1770 by the Rev. Junipero Serra, the mission church "is Carmel," Roehl said. It's depicted on the city seal and is a major tourist attraction, a venue for community events — I Cantori and the Carmel Bach Festival, the Concours d'Elegance, art exhibits and lectures — a historic landmark and an active parish church.

The foundation's interest, Roehl said, is in "bricks and mortar," not the mission as a

site of religious worship, and in any case, maintaining the historic building would be beyond the means of a conventional church congregation.

The foundation is raising money for the restoration through private donations, state and federal grants, and foundations, and so far has funded \$600,000 of \$700,000 in "soft" costs — surveying, investigating and researching what the project will entail, according to foundation president Samuel Wright.

The restoration of the Royal Presidio Chapel, San Carlos Cathedral, in Monterey, completed in 2009, took two years and cost \$7.5 million. The mission restoration cost is estimated at \$3.6 million, Wright said.

"This is a huge cultural and economic resource for the Peninsula," Wright said.

San Carlos Borromeo del Rio Carmelo doesn't have as many structural problems as the Monterey church, Roehl said. Its walls are solid stone blocks rather than the double walls of the Presidio Chapel that were filled with rubble.

Downie's restoration was done before current state seismic standards, and to meet them, the project calls for drilling hundreds of holes through the stone and inserting steel reinforcing bars to make the walls earthquake-safe, Roehl said.

The restoration will be in two phases: the first, beginning in April, will involve

removal of the roof, the seismic drilling, roof framing, a fire sprinkler system and upgrading electrical and communication systems, Roehl said. The second phase includes repairs to the exterior walls and bell tower dome, connecting wiring, plumbing and lighting, and bringing restrooms and access into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The foundation hopes to have the mission reopened in time to celebrate Serra's 300th birthday in 2013, Roehl said.

A memorial wall listing donors to the restoration and containing a capsule history of Serra's life is planned for the mission courtyard, he said. Last month the foundation received a \$10,000 matching grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Cynthia Woods Mitchell Fund for Historic Interiors, and a \$50,000 grant from the Dunspough-Dalton Foundation.

The Carmel Mission restoration survey was conducted by Architectural Resources Group of San Francisco, the same company that worked on the San Carlos Cathedral project, and the architectural firm of Franks Brenkwitz & Associates of Aptos, which also worked on the San Carlos project.

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The first phase of mission restoration will include removal of the roof, below. The second phase includes repairs to the exterior walls and bell tower dome. The mission's walls are solid stone blocks. The foundation hopes to reopen the mission in 2013.

