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Mission preservation will raise the roof

By MARY BROWNFIELD

WITH ITS new and freshly restored bells in place in the tower, the Carmel Mission is set to undergo another dramatic step in its historic renovation: the removal of the Basilica's roof. But first, the nonprofit Carmel Mission Foundation has to raise the money to do the work.

"The trick to this whole thing is fundraising," CMF general manager Tim Roehl said Wednesday.

If the foundation's Tricentennial Capital Campaign — named so because the nonprofit hopes to have the Mission restoration completed by Father Junipero Serra's 300th birthday in 2013 — brings in the funds, work on the roof could get under way after the rains subside next

spring. Roehl said he hopes to have the design completed late this year and permits acquired from the national and state offices of historic preservation and the City of Carmel by early spring.

"The idea would be to move forward with the building phase in the spring whenever they say the rain's going to stop, to give them the longest period possible to have the roof off," he said.

After receiving the go-ahead, and provided the funds are in place, crews will begin removing the clay-barrel roof tiles installed in 1936. According to Roehl, the current roof is the Mission's third.

They will then take off the wood planks underlying the tile — but not the ceiling over the Basilica — and will drill holes down through the 5-foot-thick walls to insert steel bars and grout in order to reinforce the masonry. Workers will tie the roof trusses, update the electrical components in the building and possibly install fire sprinklers before replacing the roof timbers and tiles.

"Our challenge is to make the church look not a whole heck of a lot different than it does now," he said.

For example, it's anticipated 30 percent to 40 percent of the top roof tiles will break during removal, so the tiles underneath, which will likely survive, will be turned over and used on the top, while fresh tiles will make up the new lower layer.

The foundation wants all the work completed without interfering with the Basilica's use, if possible.

"The challenge we're giving the architects and designers

is that the church will still be able to be used," Roehl added. Ideally, Sunday Mass and other regular services, as well as special events like Bach Festival concerts, will continue unabated.

"The crazy thing is the roof will be off, but the ceiling will be in," he said. "That will take place throughout summer 2011 and hopefully be covered up again by the time the rains come."

The bigger picture

The Aptos-based historical architecture and planning firm of Franks Brenkwitz & Associates is conducting research and design of the renovation plan that will focus not just on the Basilica, but on the entire quadrangle, including the Convento Wing that contains the museum store, the Blessed Sacrament Chapel Wing, the rectory/parish office wing and the Junipero Serra School wing, as well as the 1930s building housing the Harry Downie Museum.

"We foresee this to be a multiyear effort guided by what we discover and available funding," architects Brett Brenkwitz and Charlie Franks wrote in a letter to the CMF board of directors.

The firm conducted a hydrology study to measure groundwater, find its sources and track runoff, and hired a structural engineer to tackle the issues of unreinforced walls and roofs. A historical consultant is helping the firm navigate the permit process and weighing in on proper preservation, and the firm is also surveying the electrical, mechanical and plumbing systems throughout the complex, including the 74-year-old radiant heating in the floors. In addition, the architects are considering undergrounding all utilities.

"All work will be done with an eye to preserving the buildings 100 years or more," they concluded. "Overall, when completed, the Carmel Mission and quadrangle structures will be safer, more efficient, and a more accessible environment that will continue to prosper and provide joy for future generations."

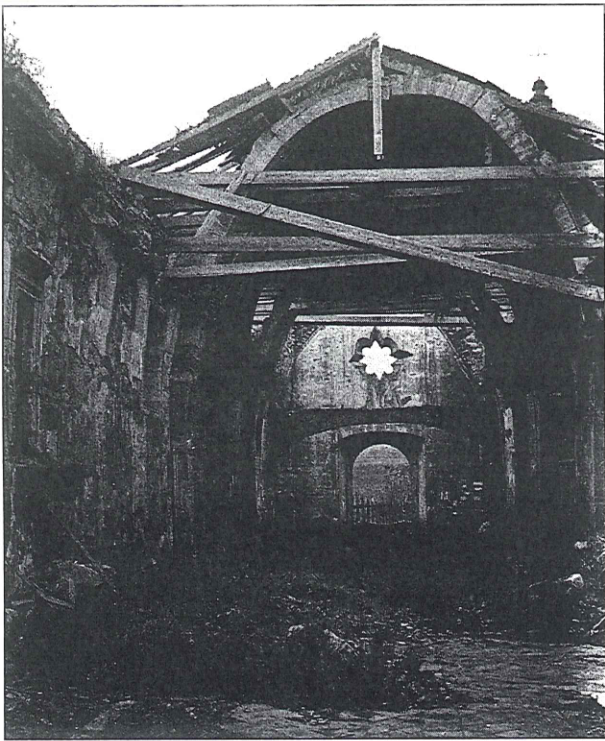
But those goals can't be met without dollars, and Roehl estimated the renovation work will total \$4 million or more.

"Our fundraising goal is to cover the costs, but we don't know what the costs are until we are done with the design and investigation phase," he said. "But you don't really know until everybody signs off."

The foundation's new campaign is centered around the 300th anniversary of Father Serra's birth in Majorca, Spain. The event will be commemorated with a memorial wall in the Mission courtyard listing the names of donors contributing \$5,000 or more.

"If fundraising doesn't go as planned, we might have to put this off a whole year," Roehl said of the roof and wall work. "There will be some drop-dead point sometime around first of the year when we are going to see if we have enough to proceed."

To help, visit www.carmelmissionfoundation.org or call (831) 624-3261.



PHOTO/COURTESY CARMEL MISSION FOUNDATION

In 1880 the Carmel Mission was a pitiful ruin, as this photograph from the altar toward the main entrance shows. After reconstruction in the 1930s, the Mission needs a new roof.



The Carmel Mission Basilica (left) is slated to receive a new roof and seismic shoring in its 5-foot-thick walls in the next phase of the Mission's extensive historic renovation — as long as the money can be raised to pay for it. It last received a new roof in 1936 (below).

PHOTOS/PAUL MILLER (LEFT); COURTESY CARMEL MISSION FOUNDATION (BELOW)

