

## San Miguel Chapel Preservation News

Cornerstones began our second year of preservation work at San Miguel Chapel by making a frightening discovery.

In removing the stucco on the north wall, we found that sometime in the past a large void had been filled with concrete and fired brick. The parapet resting on this section was in immediate danger - **we estimated that as much as 5 tons of material was hanging in the air at that location.**



Had that section collapsed it would have been catastrophic for the church as well as for the road below and any traffic or pedestrians. We immediately braced this parapet and over the course of several days installed timber bracing from the ground up. Once the bracing was in place we proceeded as carefully and as quickly as we could to remove the adobe parapet in this area. About 24' linear feet of parapet was removed in stair-step fashion, piece by piece. Work proceeded to remove adobe that had deteriorated, collapsed, cracked and/or crumbled.



In the course of removing this adobe further concern arose about the capacity of this section to support the roof. In some areas we found ourselves right at the interior plasters. We proceeded to install shoring inside the church from the ground through the choir loft to the vigas above the choir loft. Once all this temporary bracing was in place work proceeded on reconstruction of the corner. The repair of the corner is being accomplished by careful structural stitching of new to old adobe using all 'in kind' materials of adobe bricks made on site and matching earthen mortar. No more than 3-4 lifts will be attempted at any one time so that the wall can dry thoroughly as it goes up.



Because of the immediate and massive preservation work required to solve this problem, we are now behind time-wise and budget-wise for the rest of the wall. We've seeking extra financial support to make up for this work and to ensure that work continues on the rest of the wall. Please come to our aid with a financial contribution for the San Miguel Preservation effort. Contact Executive Director Robin Jones for how to help at 505-982-9521 or email at [rjones@cstones.org](mailto:rjones@cstones.org)