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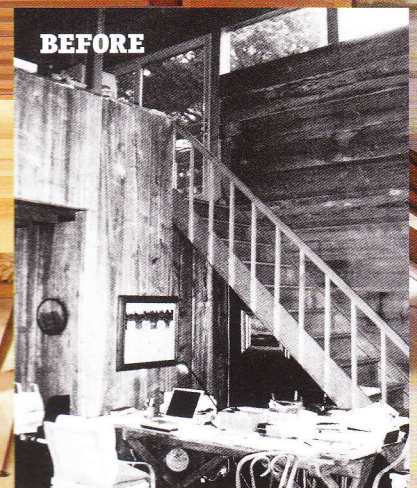
SPRING GREENING

Modern Landscaping 101

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Stadium Game

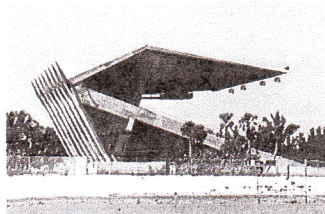
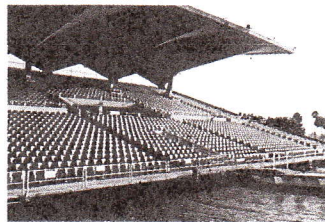
Among America's notable architectural ruins, few are as singular as the grandstand for Commodore Munroe Stadium, designed by Cuban-born architect Hilario Candela in 1964 and approved for possible landmark status last July by Miami's Historic and Environmental Preservation Board. Better known as Miami Marine Stadium, the structure on Virginia Key, an island north of Key Biscayne, looks out over a 5,300-foot-long water basin—the first in the U.S. built to showcase powerboat racing.

Candela, working with architect Albert Ferendino, overcame the city's preference for steel framing to produce a 6,566-seat, poured-concrete structure with a cantilevered waveform roof—one of the largest spans of unsupported concrete extant—set atop eight slanting piers. The folded plate roof and the strong diagonal formed by the edge of the stadium's tiers have been compared both to an alligator's jaws and to origami.

The stadium's floating stage also made it a memorable concert venue. "When a performer finished, everyone applauded, and people on hundreds of surrounding boats started blasting their horns—and you looked up at the city and the moonlight—it was a peak experience," recalls Don Worth, cofounder of Friends of Miami Marine Stadium.

So why, after damage from Hurricane Andrew in 1992 forced it to close, has Candela's masterwork lain shuttered, encrusted with corrosion and graffiti, for more than 15 years?

Worth suggests that the city, lacking proper management expertise and facing financial difficulties of its own, preferred simply to let it go. "You know what happens to waterfront



property in Miami—someone develops it," Worth says. "So for years, schemes have been proposed that would involve knocking the stadium down."

In addition to lobbying for landmark status, Friends of Miami Marine Stadium—a preservation group affiliated with Dade Heritage Trust—has been attempting to demonstrate the structure's cultural viability. The group is also seeking public and private funding to cover renovation costs that the city puts at \$30 million.

Despite broad support for saving the stadium, though, Worth fears Miami will use the estimate as an excuse for demolition. That, he believes, would be a shame: "I've been involved in a number of preservation efforts. Some resonate and some don't. This one does because it combines powerful architecture with great collective memories. Can you imagine anything better?"

—Marc Kristal

marinestadium.org

Photos by LCR/Troika (St. Pancras), courtesy Friends of Miami Marine Stadium (stadium)

Preservation