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One of the world's leading preservation organizations is asking School of Business undergraduate and graduate students for fresh ideas to revive the Miami Marine Stadium, a Key Biscayne landmark built in 1964.

Amy Freitag, U.S. program director for the World Monuments Fund (WMF) in New York, was in Miami in February for discussions with civic leaders about reviving the unique 6,566-seat waterfront stadium, which has been closed for nearly two decades. She also made a special visit to the School of Business to discuss the project with students in a real estate class taught by Andrea Heuson, a professor of finance. "It's not just a matter of saving the architecture. You have to have a plan that will make the stadium viable for the future," Freitag told students. "Otherwise, the outcome is likely to be further deterioration or what we call demolition by neglect."



Amy Freitag, program director, United States, World Monuments Fund and Professor Jorge Hernandez, UM School of Architecture

Every two years, the WMF identifies historic sites at risk, sifting through hundreds of nominations. Last year, the Commodore Ralph Middleton Munroe Miami Marine Stadium was placed on the fund's "2010 Watch List," helping to build momentum for restoring the facility, Freitag said. Designed by Cuban-American architect Hilario Candela, the stadium was the first purpose-built venue for powerboat racing in the U.S., and the concrete open-air facility hosted concerts, political gatherings and other events for more than 25 years until it was closed after Hurricane Andrew in 1992.

The WMF's work has included the Taj Mahal in India, the Great Wall of China and "Save Venice," a 25-year program to preserve and protect the Italian city's historic buildings. In Haiti, the fund reviewed the status of a collection of historic "gingerbread" houses on stilts that largely survived the Jan. 12 earthquake.



In the United States, the fund assisted in salvaging the World Trade Center's "survivors staircase" after the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in Manhattan and is still helping homeowners in New Orleans' Ninth Ward rebuild after Hurricane Katrina in 2005. "It's not just a matter of repairing damage," Freitag told the class. "We also help to develop scenarios to make historic places meaningful and relevant. That's exactly what's needed with Miami Marine Stadium."

Three groups of students in Heuson's class will analyze three potential development scenarios for the stadium:

Future rendering of the Miami Marine Stadium by Arseni Varabyeu

adding a marine retailing component, creating a marine design center or creating a marine museum that would attract visitors from around the world.

Freitag told the real estate students their research and analysis of development options for the stadium and surrounding land will help shape the stadium's future. "If the findings from your work are viable, you will help the City of Miami develop an effective plan for a vibrant well-used marine facility," she said.