

Ignacio Permuy elected new chair of Miami Development Review Board

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*UDRB chair Ignacio Permuy is pictured in his office.
(Photo by Colls Fine Art Photography, courtesy of
Permuy Architecture)*

Ignacio Permuy, president of Coral Gables-based Permuy Architecture, has been elected the new chair of the Urban Development Review Board (UDRB) of the City of Miami.

The UDRB is a key public board responsible for reviewing all major developments in Miami of more than 200,000 square feet for approval and adherence to the Miami 21 zoning code. It is composed of leading architects and planners from the community appointed by the Miami City Commission.

Permuy, who represents District 1, was first appointed by the city commission in late 2017 to replace his father, regarded architect and urban planner Jesús Permuy, following his retirement from the board. He then served as vice chair from 2019 to 2022.

As a second-generation architect, Permuy was surrounded by architecture and planning in his upbringing. His father, Jesús, was his first exposure and lent the added depth of what Permuy's firm describes as an "urban planning perspective," which views each project beyond its individual design elements and accounts for the broader context of a site's history, physical surroundings, and community.

Permuy also is impacted by the arts. A significant early influence on his career was longtime family friend and award-winning multimedia artist Rafael Consuegra. Permuy recalls that he first became inspired to become an architect by sketching his art as a child, which was itself informed by Consuegra's architecture studies.

As an architecture student at the Pratt Institute of New York, Permuy also was a studio assistant to late famed artist Juan Gonzalez, a close friend of his mother Marta.

Permuy helped Gonzalez prepare his elaborate mixed-media stage designs for the 1988 production of Federico García Lorca's Blood Wedding. That year Gonzalez also held a solo exhibition at Pratt Institute.

Permuy Architecture continues to host art exhibitions to support local artists and has collaborated on projects with high-profile international artists such as Carsten Höller, Jan Hendrix, and Consuegra.

Permuy's New York period was formative to the rest of his architecture career. During his studies at the Pratt Institute, Permuy also earned the Institute's sole internship with leading architect and MoMA-featured artist Roger C. Ferri. That internship grew into a long-term paid staff position in his SoHo office. Permuy remained with Ferri for several years through the late 1980s and '90s, in which time he was closely mentored by late pioneering designer.

After earning over a decade of experience in New York City, Permuy relocated back to South Florida in 1998 and worked in project management for prominent architecture firms Arquitectonica and NBWW.

In that time, he oversaw several high-rise developments of the early 2000s, notably including the Diplomat Resort in Hollywood that helped spur the area's subsequent development wave.

Permuy then launched his own practice and gained prominence with Permuy Architecture, originally established in 2006 as TERRA Architecture. Early recognition came through legendary developer Tibor Hollo, founder of Florida East Coast Realty (FECR) and namesake of FIU's Hollo School of Real Estate. Their friendship of nearly two decades began at a fundraiser Permuy held for then U.S. Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen in 2005. Permuy went on to design Hollo's largest Florida projects of the decade: One Bayfront Plaza and Tropicana Center in St. Petersburg (now called ONE St. Petersburg).

With his institutional experience, Permuy was instrumental in securing a landmark achievement considered impossible by many insiders at the time— getting Miami International Airport, the FAA, and UDRB to approve a height of 1,049 feet for One Bayfront Plaza just six years after the Sept. 11 attacks. At the time, it was the highest approved height for a tower south of New York and preceded the ongoing development boom that has solidified Miami's place as a major international commerce hub in the 21st century.

Reacting to the news of Permuy's recent election as UDRB chair, Tibor Hollo offered his congratulations, stating, "I am so glad [Permuy was] elected chairman," adding it was "well-deserved." Hollo also reaffirmed his foresight, saying "Early in [Permuy's] career, I saw that sparkle."

FECR spokesperson and vice president of Marketing, Luis Espinosa, also released a statement, saying, "Permuy's unique vision and talents as one of South Florida's premier architects has made a major impact on the entire real estate development industry."

Espinosa added, "Coupled with his creative acumen, his strong understanding of the legal entities involved in real estate development (i.e. FAA, UDRB, Planning & Zoning) has helped us navigate the sometimes complex waters involved."

In addition to Hollo, Permuy has worked with Turnberry Associates, Zumba Fitness founder Beto Perez, Homestead-Miami Speedway developer Ralph Sanchez and others throughout Miami, Coral Gables, Miami Beach, Aventura, and Greater Fort Lauderdale.

More recently, Permuy's firm gained attention for developing a new design style called ZenLux, centered around clean forms and emphasis on the natural elements. The first ZenLux project, the Aqua Azure residence in Pinecrest, sold for nearly \$9 million in March through Douglas Elliman.

In addition to chairing the Miami UDRB, Permuy is also vice chair of the Coral Gables Construction Regulation Board and sits on FIU's CARTA Dean's Leadership Advisory Board, which convenes to consult on matters relating to communications, architecture, and the arts.

Speaking on the UDRB's future, Permuy said, "It's an honor to be elected chair by my fellow board members. The UDRB remains an essential body to uphold the public interest through the enforcement of our zoning code. We remain committed to supporting responsible development in alignment with Miami's culture and identity. When approached with integrity, both design and development play essential roles in shaping our identity, addressing our regional issues, and facilitating sustainable growth."

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