

make up the civic cabinet.

be sacked.

agement advisory board.

who promptly appointed him

mayor, declined to comment.

Elections nobble good design, say architects

Bernard Lane

• Urban affairs writer

RENOWNED architect Glenn Murcutt says the not-in-my-backyard mentality has been a winner in Sydney's council elections.

"The results of the weekend's local government elections reflect the NIMBY syndrome," Mr Murcutt, founding president of the Architecture Association of Australia, said yesterday of the strong showing by the Greens and Labor defeats in inner Sydney.

"Most people are frightened of today and tomorrow, they don't understand good con-

temporary design and prefer buildings designed to look like Federation," Mr Murcutt said.

"If you went back 200 years and showed today's buildings to people, they would be horrified and would reject the 21st-century building."

Mr Murcutt, Australia's only winner of the international Pritzker prize, argues that good design is being frustrated by a local planning system that enshrines mediocrity and a misplaced nostalgia.

On Thursday, two senior figures from the Royal Australian Institute of Architects, NSW chapter president Caroline Pidcock and past national



Mr Murcutt

president Graham Jahn, are due to meet NSW Planning Minister Craig Knowles to lobby for a radical streamlining of the planning system. Under the plan the scope for local council micro-management and neighbourhood conflict over small-scale residential projects would be reduced sharply. Planning rules would be simplified to concentrate on privacy, overshadowing and site coverage. Subjective issues

such as the look and colour of a house would no longer be grounds for opposition.

"Some of the councils have got down to exact dimensioning of windows," Ms Pidcock said. "Local government needs to be hands-on in the right places."

She said the idea was to free up councils and residents so they could devote time and expertise to coming up with sound planning documents and to assessing the effect of major development.

"For people who are concerned about the environment, there is appropriate development — and some of it is not going to look like any-

thing we've seen before," Ms Pidcock said.

Good cross-ventilation and passive solar design, for example, might produce a roof shape unlike that of the neighbouring building.

She said the issue underlying the anti-development unease was the need to manage the strong population growth of Sydney.

The solution lay in good design, a reform of local planning and strong policy at the regional and state levels, she said.

"It is not solved by saying not in my backyard," she said.

