

Lippmann hits out at council

Award-winning architect calls for end to 'waste'. Report MARK GERTSKIS

Councils should be stripped of their powers to decide on the aesthetic merits of development applications, to cut down the money spent within the court system, a prominent architect has said.

Ed Lippmann, designer of the award-winning Andrew ("Boy") Charlton Pool, said an independent design review panel should be established, and that councillors should only be able to discuss development controls such as floor-space ratios, heights and boundary setbacks.

The comments were made after Mr Lippmann won an appeal in the Land and Environment Court, contesting Waverley Council's rejection of a development at North Bondi which had already gained the endorsement of council planners.

"Waverley Council's decision to blatantly ignore the advice of all the experts displays their arrogance, and rogue attitude to the

planning process," Mr Lippmann said. "It was a complete and utter waste of public money, which the ratepayers of Waverley shouldn't be putting up with."

Waverley mayor Mora Main pointed to excavation concerns at the North Bondi development, defending a councillor's right to go against planning advice.

"It's our democratic right, and that's why we're there," Cr Main said.

"The community's values may be different from architect values. Neither may be right or wrong."

The NSW Planning Minister, Frank Sartor, said many councils were not considering the broader public interest, or the need to give certainty to property owners.

"It's fair to say councillors too often want to use the planning process for political gain, and that doesn't do local government any good," Mr Sartor said.