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# Keep tall buildings out, says planner

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Tall commercial buildings should not be allowed to intrude further into residential areas of the City, an urban planner, Mr George Clarke, said yesterday.

He said the residential areas were essential for the commercial core to function.

"We should not allow tall, high-density offices, no matter how excitingly designed, to spread outwards from the compact core into the frame areas of Woolloomooloo, Oxford Street, Ultimo, Pyrmont, and Surry Hills," he said.

Mr Clarke was addressing 250 engineers and architects at the Australian and New Zealand Conference on the Planning and Design of Tall Buildings.

The week-long conference, which ends today, has drawn academics from 15 countries, including Britain, Africa, Malaysia and the United States.

Mr Clarke, whose company, Urban Systems

Corporation, is planning consultant to the Sydney City Council, said cities should not become "playgrounds" for real-estate speculators.

Nor should they become collections of individual, unrelated sites on which to display the "virtuosity of architects, engineers and developers in producing elegant and astonishing monuments," he said.

Skills should be redeployed to the planning and design of cities as integrated units.

Tall buildings could then be encouraged in compact commercial cores.

Mr Clarke said individual tall buildings which provided their own shopping malls and plazas were not sufficient for good planning.

"Such individual projects, however good internally, are simply not enough to satisfy the increasing world-wide public demand for the recivilising of our central areas," he said.

"Recently, in Sydney and Melbourne the flow of

investment by relative amateurs into tall office buildings, particularly in fringe locations, has produced an over-supply of badly located, low-quality tall buildings in urban areas.

"Whereas 20 years ago the announcement of a tall building project was acclaimed by the public as an exciting addition to the cityscape, we are currently experiencing a backlash against such projects."

Mr Clarke said more traffic-free pedestrian networks, similar to Martin Plaza, were needed in Sydney, together with widened footpaths and some streets solely for the use of public transport and essential service and delivery vehicles.

Parking stations in the inner-city should be closed down and replaced by parking stations on the city fringe.

These should be easily serviced from expressways and linked across the central business district by new forms of intra-city public transport, he said.