chowhill

Workplace Strategy 07

Workplace Design 14

Commercial Interiors 20

CONNECTED /BY DESIGN

Workplace + Interiors



About us

Founded in 1992, today we are a multidisciplinary design company with a dedicated team of registered architects, architectural technicians, landscape architects, urban designers, and interior designers.

From our three studios in Hamilton/Kirikiriroa, Auckland/Tāmaki Makaurau, and Christchurch/Otautahi, we create places with meaning.

Our knowledge and design expertise are coupled with ongoing leadership, creative talent, and a practical, hands-on understanding of what it takes to deliver inspiring and successful commercial outcomes.

As a team, we are open to new ideas, seeking opportunities to collaborate with clients, teams, and individuals. We are committed to the evolution and development of progressive design thinking, integrating sustainable design principles into every project.



Union Square, Building E
Hamilton

Make confident workplace decisions, connected by design

Many organisations reach a point where their workplace no longer fully supports how they operate. Hybrid working has shifted behaviours. Space is underused or misaligned. Culture feels harder to sustain. Investment decisions carry more risk because the future is uncertain.

Chow:Hill Architects provides workplace strategy services to help leaders navigate this moment with confidence.

Our architectural-led workplace strategy services give decision makers clarity before capital is committed. By understanding how people work today, how culture is evolving, and what the organisation needs to support next, we help reduce risk and set a clear direction for change.

At Chow:Hill, workplace strategy is organisation-led, not design-led. We begin with people, performance, and culture, connecting these through a considered and creative design process. Design follows only when the direction is clear.



Waikato Regional Council
Hamilton



Waikato Regional Council
Hamilton

Why workplace strategy matters

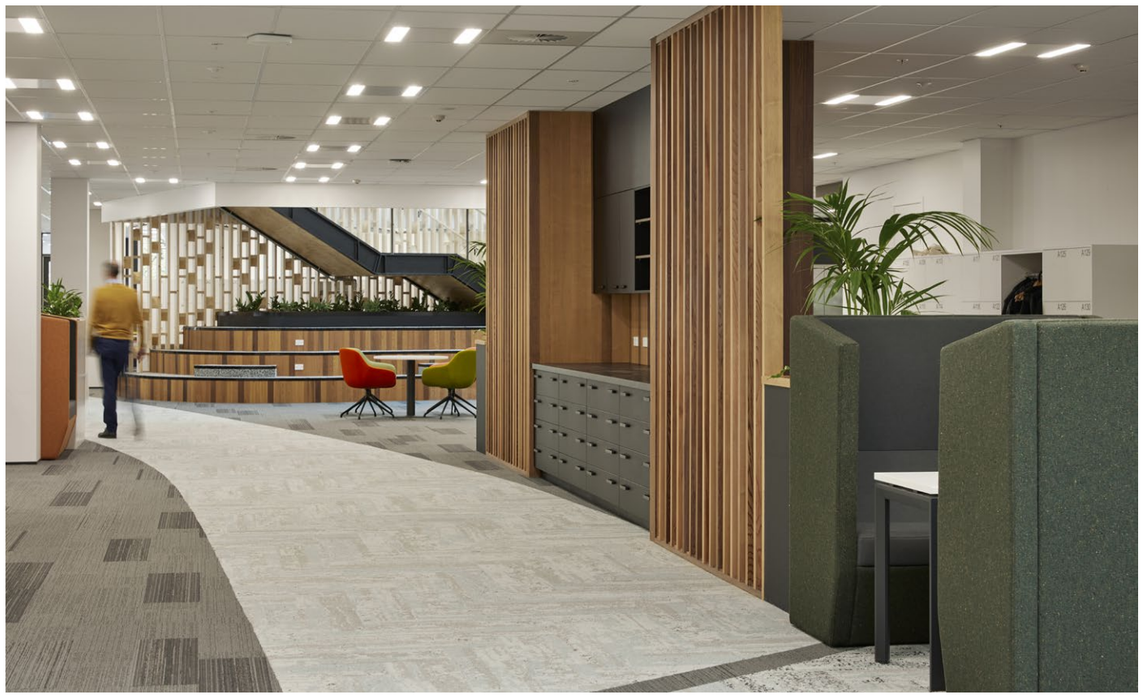
Many workplace projects begin with assumptions. More desks. More meeting rooms. A refreshed aesthetic. These decisions can be costly, difficult to undo, and disconnected from how people actually work.

Workplace strategy creates a deliberate pause before action. It equips leaders with evidence, insight, and options, allowing investment to be targeted where it will have the greatest impact.

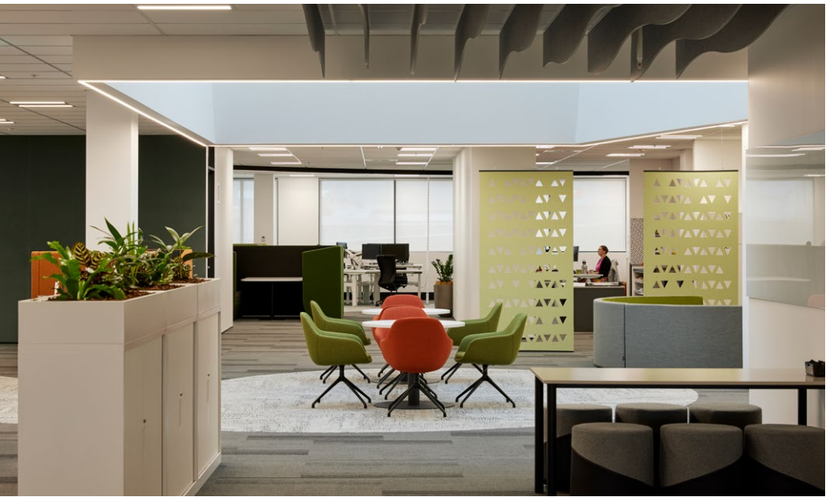
Our workplace strategy services help organisations, connected by design, to:

- Align workplace decisions with business goals and organisational culture
- Support hybrid and flexible work without compromising performance
- Reduce the risk of poor uptake or resistance to change
- Avoid overbuilding or misdirected investment
- Create workplaces people actively choose to use

Strategy does not slow projects down. It provides the confidence to move forward with clarity and purpose.







Waikato Regional Council, Hamilton

The Waikato Regional Council's new 7,000sqm headquarters in the heart of Hamilton's CBD tells a story. Purpose-built to house Council staff who had previously worked out of multiple locations, the four-storey premises provides a central agile and flexible workspace for staff to enjoy. Fundamental to the design was Chow:Hill's workplace strategy, carefully thought out to ensure Waikato Regional Council could embrace a new way of working; one that allowed for an agile floor plan, flexible working opportunities, and multi-team connection.



Our approach

Our workplace strategy services are delivered through a structured, practical, and deeply human process. We combine qualitative insight with targeted analysis to ensure decisions are grounded in real behaviour rather than assumptions.

We typically explore:

- How different roles and teams work day to day
- Patterns of focus, collaboration, movement, and interaction
- Hybrid behaviours and technology needs
- Cultural values and desired behaviours
- Space utilisation and operational pain points
- Change readiness and adoption risks

The outcome is not a fixed answer, but a set of clear principles, priorities, and scenarios that support confident decision making. Leaders are presented with options, implications, and recommendations they can stand behind.



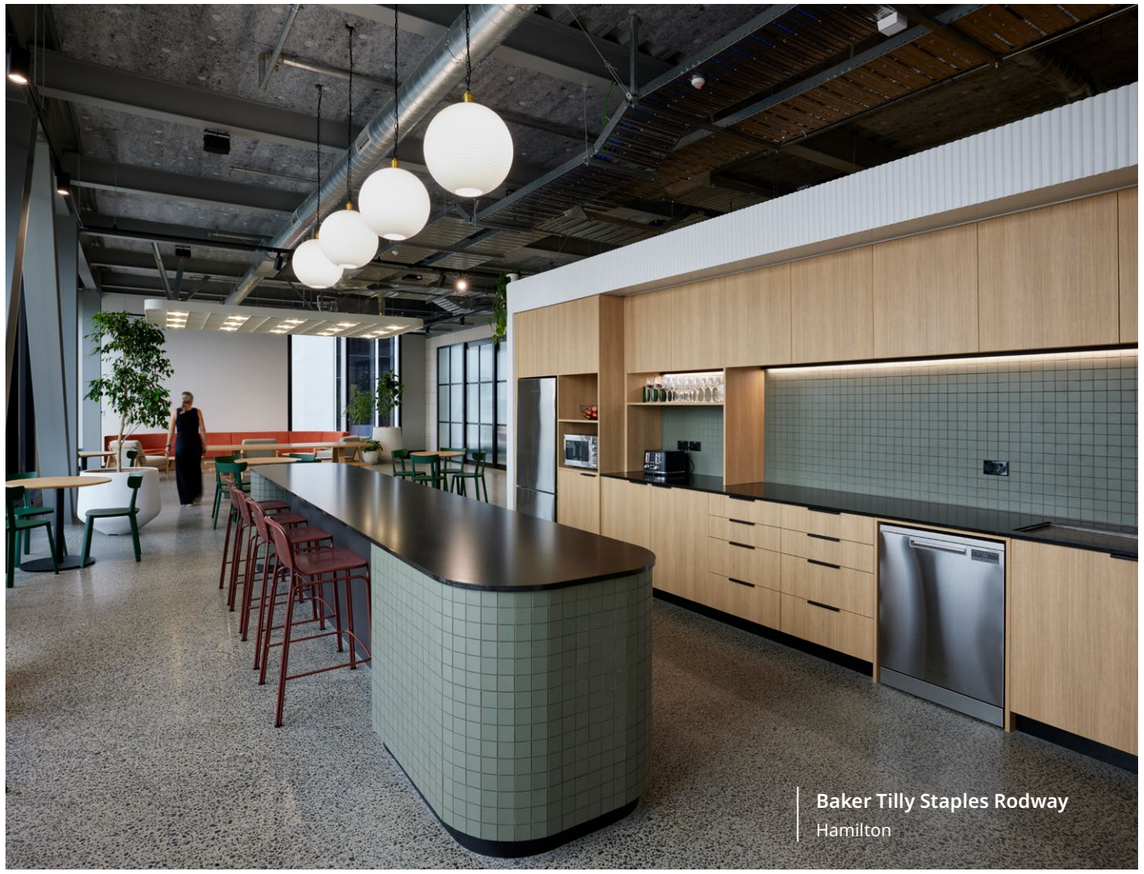
Outcomes that matter to leaders

A successful workplace strategy service is measured by outcomes, not documents.

Our services give leaders:

- Clarity on what the workplace must support and why
- Confidence to invest without unnecessary risk
- Alignment across leadership and key stakeholders
- A clear brief that reduces redesign, scope creep, and cost escalation
- A workplace framework that can adapt as needs change

For staff, this translates into environments that feel intuitive, supportive, and meaningful. For organisations, it creates resilience.



Baker Tilly Staples Rodway
Hamilton



McCaw Lewis
Hamilton





McCaw Lewis, Hamilton

Collaboration and sustainable design shaped a piece of 1970's concrete modernism into a contemporary, flexible workplace, that has enhanced client and employee experience. Supporting agile team dynamics and encapsulating a sense of personality and identity, Chow:Hill's design of McCaw Lewis' offices was delivered in collaboration with property development specialists, Foster Developers.

Connecting people, culture and place

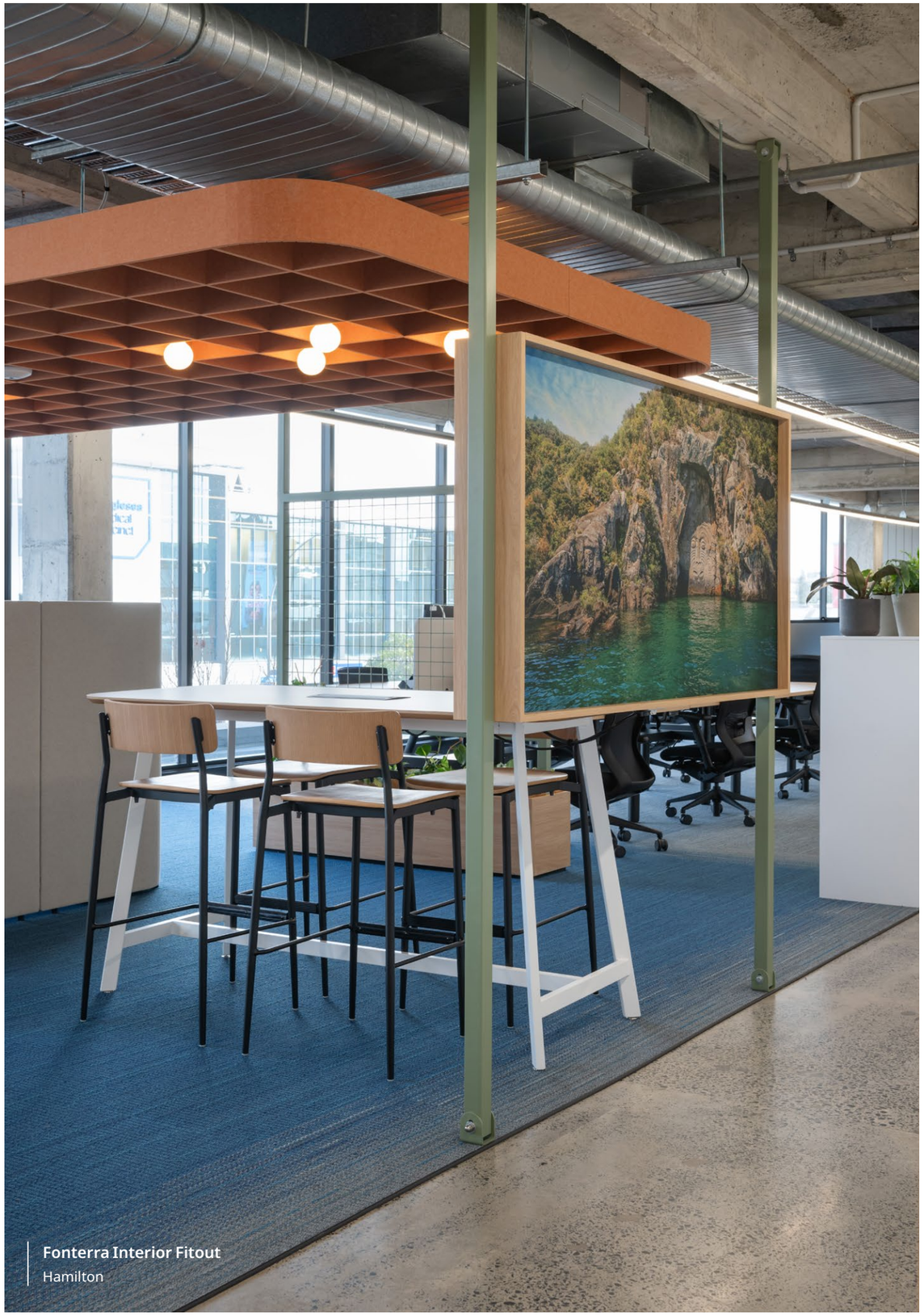
Effective workplaces do not happen by accident. They are shaped by how people interact, how culture is expressed, and how space supports daily work.

Our workplace strategies focus on connecting people, culture, and place in ways that feel natural rather than forced. We examine where connection happens organically, where it breaks down, and how space can support the behaviours an organisation values.

Rather than defaulting to open plan or more meeting rooms, we help clients understand when people need to come together, when they need focus, and when they need autonomy.

When the workplace reflects who an organisation is and how it wants to work, engagement follows. This is design acting as a connector between people, culture, and place.





Fonterra Interior Fitout
Hamilton



Fonterra Interior Fitout
Hamilton

Human-centred and inclusive design

People experience workplaces differently. Roles, work styles, cultural needs, and personal circumstances vary widely.

Our workplace strategies plan for variety and choice rather than uniform solutions, bringing together people, culture, and place through thoughtful, human-centred design thinking.

Quiet focus areas, collaborative zones, private spaces, and social settings all play a role. This approach supports wellbeing, inclusion, and productivity, while also easing the transition through change. When people understand the reasoning behind decisions, adoption improves and resistance reduces.

Sustainable and responsible outcomes

Sustainability is embedded in our architectural and workplace strategy services from the outset.

We consider environmental impact, cultural responsibility, operational efficiency, and long-term value together as part of an integrated architectural and workplace strategy service. Early strategic decisions help reduce waste, support circularity, and extend the life of workplace investments.

Our approach is informed by cultural principles that prioritise relationships, collaboration, and care, guiding both how we engage and what we deliver.

Collaboration that reduces risk

Alignment is critical to successful workplace change. We work closely with leaders, stakeholders, and project teams through clear and purposeful engagement as part of our architectural and workplace strategy services.

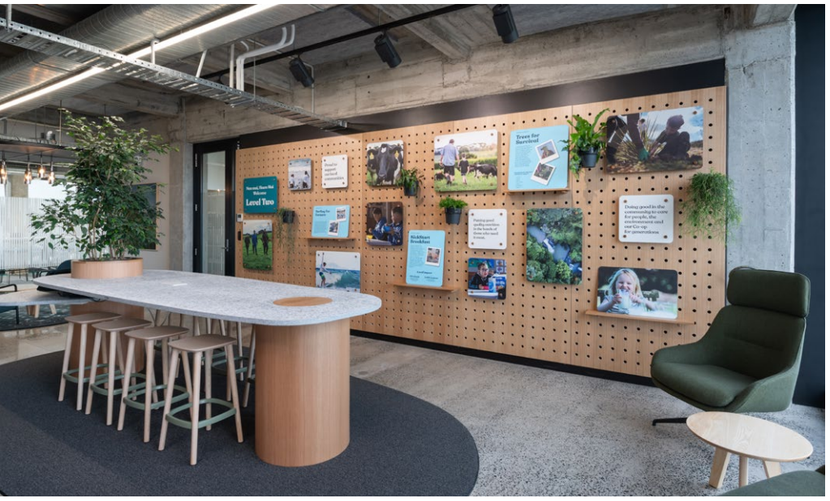
Engagement is structured to surface risk early, build shared understanding, and support confident decision making. Senior members of our team remain directly involved throughout the process, ensuring continuity of thinking and accountability from strategy through to delivery, working with integrity and agility at every stage.

Designing for an uncertain future

The future of work cannot be predicted, but workplaces can be prepared. Our workplace strategy services prioritise flexibility, adaptability, and longevity. We help organisations avoid locking in assumptions that may not hold, instead creating frameworks that allow spaces to evolve with minimal disruption. This includes thinking about:

- Adaptable and modular planning approaches
- Technology that supports change rather than dictates behaviour
- Whole-of-life value rather than short-term solutions

Future-ready workplaces give leaders confidence to respond rather than react.







Fonterra Interior Fitout South Bloc, Hamilton

From farm to table, Fonterra's new workplace hub in Hamilton's southern CBD commercial precinct has been inspired by natural assets from across the region. New Zealand's largest dairy co-operative, Fonterra, has long had its feet planted firmly in Waikato soil. When a change in commercial premises arose for the dairy co-operative, which is responsible for approximately 30% of the world's dairy exports, Chow:Hill, in collaboration with project partners, Designwell, were tasked with creating a new workplace hub that truly reflected the Fonterra brand and culture.

Design Expertise

With a deep understanding of the built environment, we have extensive experience in the commercial and interiors design sector.

Our knowledge and design expertise is coupled with ongoing leadership, creative talent, and a practical hands-on understanding of what it takes to deliver inspiring and successful commercial outcomes. As a team we are open to new ideas, seeking opportunities to work with clients, teams, and individuals. We are committed to the evolution and development of progressive design thinking, integrating sustainable design principles into every project.





Te Kete Aronui, Rototuna Library

Chow:Hill's library design in Rototuna Town Centre, created with Designwell and AECOM, serves as a cultural hub for the local community. Embodying the desire for a distinctive village atmosphere, the vision integrates the rich cultural heritage of the area with a contemporary aesthetic.

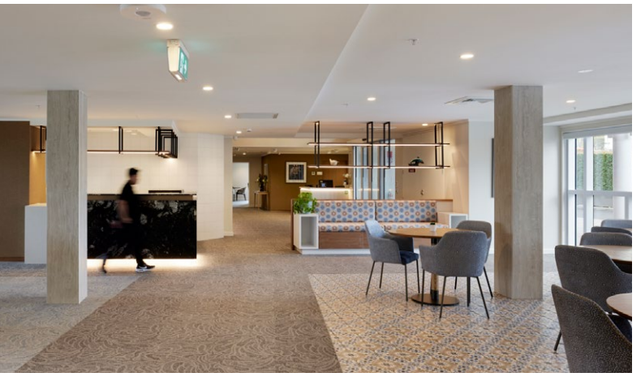
OTHER PROJECTS

Senior Living



Awatere Village, Stage 2

Awatere, located at the north end of Hamilton's Victoria Street on the banks of the Waikato River, is made up of apartments and care suites, as well as community spaces including a cinema, library, crafts room, gym, outdoor seating area, and a bowling green. In 2022, Stage 2 of Awatere Village, which comprises of 63 apartments, associated facilities, a 1400sqm community centre, and basement parking was completed.



Everil Orr Village, Stage 3

Located adjacent to one of Auckland's prominent volcanic cones, Everil Orr Retirement Village is going through a transformation from a prominent landmark in the area to a modern aged care facility with the ability to be home to people across the full continuum of retirement living. Construction was completed in June 2023. Stage 3 has a mix of eight apartments, 49 care suites and 19 spaces for People Living with Dementia spread over four levels, with common areas dotted throughout to turn the building into an inviting home for residents and their families.



Meadowbank Retirement Village

A large scale development in the heart of Meadowbank with the main block two, pictured, providing the common facilitieas to service the village, including a salon, bar, reception, library and more. The generous proportions and double height volume atrium create a dramatic entrance and grand impression to residents and visitors alike.

OTHER PROJECTS

Health & Commercial

Taranaki Cancer Centre

This building is designed to de-emphasise the highly clinical and technical nature of oncology treatment and focus on the natural world. Timber panelled walls curve inwards to embrace glazed public entry and waiting areas, set within garden planting. Feature timber ceilings admit natural light deep into the chemotherapy area and lift the eye to distant sky and ocean views. This specialist health facility is focused on improving the experience and clinical outcomes of patients in Taranaki, whilst aiming for high levels of cultural integration and sustainability.



Adult Rehabilitation Integrated Stroke Unit

Auckland City Hospital's 41-bed Integrated Stroke Unit reflects international best practice for healthcaare design and evokes an ambience of open space and holistic care, complete with a New Zealand native theme. The design of the unit aims to involve families in the rehabilitation journey: the living room concept (shared spaces) outside the patients' bedrooms and the central dining area, encourage rehabilitation activities to happen outside dedicated gym sessions.



Ebbett Gateway

Chow:Hill's understanding of display, service and customer satisfaction as central tenets of a successful automotive centre have resulted in a state-of-the-art building more akin to a high end hotel than your typical car dealership. Polished concrete floors, ample natural light and a subtle use of colour and relaxed furnishings add to the ambience of the dealership's expansive showroom. The light and airy service workshop is remarkable for the detailed attention given to the service bays, each one personalised to its resident mechanic.





Baker Tilly Staples Rodway
Hamilton

Why Chow:Hill Architects

Chow:Hill Architects brings together architectural thinking, workplace strategy, and delivery expertise within a single, integrated practice.

Our difference lies in the combination of:

- Architecture-led workplace strategy grounded in real delivery experience
- Deep engagement that connects people, culture, and place
- End-to-end accountability from early strategy through to design and implementation

This integrated approach reduces risk, maintains strategic intent, and gives clients confidence that ideas developed early will carry through to built outcomes.

A practical starting point

Workplace strategy does not need to begin with a full transformation.

Many of our client relationships start with a focused discovery or diagnostic phase. This initial step provides clarity on key challenges, opportunities, and risks, and helps determine the most appropriate path forward.

It is a low-risk way to test assumptions, build alignment, and establish whether broader change is required.

A confident next step

You do not need all the answers to begin.

A well-structured workplace strategy service provides a clear and defensible starting point for change. It supports better decisions, stronger alignment, and workplaces that remain relevant as organisations evolve.

If you are questioning whether your workplace is supporting your people, culture, and future direction, a conversation is often the most valuable first step.

When strategy leads and design follows, workplaces work harder for the organisations they support, connected by design and aligned to people, culture, and place.



Baker Tilly Staples Rodway
Hamilton

Meet the Team

The Chow:Hill Interiors and Architecture team has been involved in the design, management and delivery of a variety of projects: from large-scale law firms, aged care facilities and regional councils to car dealerships, health clinics and hospitals, and everything in between. We work alongside our clients and consultants, establishing and maintaining relationships that are built on mutual respect. Whatever the scale of a project, the core principles of our design approach remain the same.

Key People

Below is a selection of our front-end people who would set the course



Brian Squair

Senior Principal // NZCD Arch, BA(BS), MBA, UDINZ
Chow:Hill Christchurch // brian.squair@chowhill.co.nz

Brian has extensive experience within the design and construction industry. His diverse portfolio includes collaborative community projects, large-scale commercial buildings, urban development feasibility studies, and intricate interior fitouts. Known for his collaborative and innovative approach, Brian guides projects from briefing to contract administration, ensuring outstanding value for clients.



Sam Thomas

Senior Principal, Registered Architect // BArch(Hons), NZIA, NZRAB
Chow:Hill Hamilton // sam.thomas@chowhill.co.nz

Sam's local and international experience on large-scale projects across tertiary education and public, commercial and health sectors, has cemented his strong project delivery skills. These attributes, combined with his significant design talent and leadership, see Sam work collaboratively with clients and stakeholders on concept design through to development, documentation and on-site delivery.



Amy Land

Associate, Senior Interior Designer // BA, BDVA (Interior Design)
Chow:Hill Auckland // amy.land@chowhill.co.nz

Amy enjoys the challenge of creating functional yet engaging interiors in which clients feel a sense of connection with their surroundings. Specialising in the interior design and documentation of healthcare and aged care projects, Amy works closely with Architecture and Health design teams to produce interior spaces that complement and enhance the surrounding architecture. Amy's design work extends into the commercial space and residential design, with a particular focus on maximising the functionality and comfort of small spaces.



Bridget Trevena

Intermediate Architect // BArch, MArch(Prof)
Chow:Hill Christchurch // bridget.trevena@chowhill.co.nz

Bridget enjoys helping people to create something they never thought was possible, and encouraging ideas to come to life, even on the smallest of scales. As an Intermediate designer in Chow:Hill's Christchurch studio, Bridget is involved in our healthcare design team, focused specifically on the construction observation through to completion of the Waipapa Christchurch Hospital Acute Services Building.

Let's connect!
We'd love to hear about your next design project.

chowhill

chowhill.co.nz

Hamilton/Kirikiriroa

+64 7 834 0348
hmlstudio@chowhill.co.nz

119 Collingwood Street
Hamilton

Christchurch/Ōtautahi

+64 3 377 1255
office@chowhill.co.nz

Level 1, 76 Victoria Street
Christchurch Central

Auckland/Tāmaki Makaurau

+64 9 522 6460
office@chowhill.co.nz

Level 3, 135 Broadway
Newmarket, Auckland