



ARCHITECTS DESIGN STATEMENT

Novak+Middleton are excited to partner with GibbonsCo to deliver Ridgeburn, a fully master planned and integrated community that responds directly to Queenstown's urgent need for a range of new housing. Located at Arrow Junction, Ridgeburn, will offer over 1,200 new homes with associated community and supporting services.

The masterplan includes a diverse range of housing options including affordable housing. Quality housing that will meet the needs of first home buyers, local workers, singles/couples, families, holiday residents, retirees and all future residents — all carefully integrated into this stunning Central Otago location. The design is one of, local character, lasting quality, resilience and sustainability, that will fit comfortably into the landscape, with a light touch to the land.

Drawing inspiration from the informal charm of early Otago settlements, Ridgeburn's meandering layout, natural landscaping, and simple gabled residential architecture reflect a deep respect for the land and its history. The masterplan protects, celebrates and enhances key landscape features, escarpments, wetlands, schist deposits, and an historic water race, while restoring historic rural buildings as vibrant community facilities.

Included are walking, biking tracks, water features, varied transport options, and an abundance of recreational opportunities, all integrated into a generous and outstanding landscaping design that will blend into the natural Central Otago environment.

Ridgeburn is a place where housing choice, community life, sustainability, and strong local identity come together. A place to call home.

Novak+Middleton are proud to support GibbonsCo in realising this vision of a fully integrated community that will be an important part of Queenstown's future.

07 May 2025

Ridgeburn – Arrowtown Junction, 122 Morven Ferry Road, Queenstown

INTRODUCTION

The Site

Ridgeburn, located at 122 Morven Ferry Road, Arrowtown Junction, is nestled within the rolling landscape of Central Otago, just outside Queenstown. The approximately 220-hectare site is discreetly framed by Morven Hill to the west and the Kawarau River to the south, offering expansive views toward Frankton and panoramic outlooks to The Remarkables.

Defined by escarpments, schist outcrops, and undulating terrain, the land features significant natural and cultural elements, including wetlands, an historic water race, and a cluster of heritage farm buildings. Historically a working farm, these features provide a strong foundation for a new master-planned community that respects both the environment and the site's agricultural heritage.

Existing Buildings

Near the site entrance, a small group of farm buildings includes a timber and stone farmhouse, a stone shearing shed, and several outbuildings. While weathered and modified over time, these structures reflect the site's agricultural history, constructed from local materials such as schist and corrugated iron. Surrounded by mature trees, the buildings remain an integral part of the landscape.

Though not formally protected, these buildings hold local heritage value. The masterplan proposes to retain and adapt them for community use, preserving a tangible connection to the past while repurposing them for modern needs. Mature trees will also be preserved and celebrated throughout the site where appropriate.





Local Character

Ridgeburn is situated in the rural landscape of Central Otago. Surrounded by open paddocks and pastoral rural lifestyle. To the west, Morven Hill provides a dramatic backdrop, while the Kawarau River Valley is an important landscape feature to the south.

The site is well connected to recreational infrastructure, including walking and cycling trails, including the Twin Rivers Trail that link to nearby towns and natural features. The site retains a sense of seclusion with Arrowtown and Lake Hayes a convenient short drive away,

The built environment surrounding Ridgeburn is characterised by dispersed rural living and low-density development. Scattered farmhouses, woolsheds, and outbuildings reflect the area's agricultural past.

More recent developments including rural lifestyle blocks and tourism accommodation, are typically set back from the roads and screened by planting.

Arrowtown, with its historic charm and compact urban form, is located to the northeast. The suburban developments of Lake Hayes Estate and Shotover Country to the south include more conventional housing typologies. These varied built forms create a balance of rural and suburban elements, with Ridgeburn located at the intersection of these areas.

Opportunities and Constraints

Ridgeburn presents a compelling opportunity to deliver much needed housing in the Queenstown Lakes area, while enhancing the natural and cultural character of Central Otago.

The site's topography, heritage buildings, and ecological features offer a strong framework for a site responsive masterplan that integrates green infrastructure, celebrates local history, and supports diverse, community focused living.

Many of Ridgeburn's constraints – steep landforms, wetlands etc– are also key drivers of design quality. The topography naturally guides development into discrete clusters, enabling sensitive placement of built form and minimising visual impact. Natural landforms encourage innovative housing typologies and street design that follows the natural ground contours and reduces earthworks.

Environmental limitations support a water sensitive approach, where wetlands and drainage corridors become public amenities – part of a wider open space network that supports walking, biodiversity, and climate resilience. Similarly, the need to respect heritage fabric fosters a development pattern that is careful, compact, and embedded in local identity.



Looking Morven Ferry Hill

DESIGN RESPONSE

Design Vision

Ridgeburn will be a contemporary neighbourhood that is deeply embedded in the landscape and heritage of Central Otago.

The design will reflect the region's building traditions, with simple, low-profile structures and gable forms that respect the site's natural character. The built environment will prioritise simplicity, proportion, and restraint, creating a harmonious whole where every detail contributes to the aesthetic integrity.

The masterplan is designed to work with the existing landform, preserving important features such as escarpments, watercourses, and heritage buildings. The street network will be walkable, enhancing connectivity and fostering a sense of community. Density transitions will be carefully managed, with higher-density affordable housing near the commercial precinct and more spacious lots in the rural heart of the site. Public spaces, including parks and heritage sites, will be interwoven with the development to promote a strong sense of place and continuity with the landscape.

The landscape strategy will reinforce the site's rural identity through informality, openness, and minimal intervention. Roads, paths, and open spaces will follow the natural contours of the land, with a loose structure that allows the landscape to remain legible. Boundaries will be soft and often undefined, blurring the line between public and private space and strengthening the connection between people and place, while still maintaining privacy for residents.



Housing Choice

Housing choice is a key priority in Ridgeburn, with a range of options designed to support a diverse and inclusive community.

At the front of the site, adjacent to the proposed commercial centre, the design provides a variety of more affordable, first home buyer, and worker-focused accommodation. This area will offer a mix of housing types—such as compact detached homes, and terraces—that support greater density and affordability while maintaining the overall design quality of the development.

Locating these homes near the commercial precinct allows for a strong relationship between living and working environments and reflects a broader commitment to providing housing that meets the needs of the wider Queenstown-Lakes community.

Commercial Precinct

The commercial precinct at Ridgeburn will provide essential services and amenities to support the day-to-day needs of residents and the surrounding area. Located also at the front of the site, it will include a small supermarket, business centre, daycare, health centre and worker accommodation. This mix of uses will create a convenient local hub that supports both living and working within the community, contributing to the overall vibrancy and self-sufficiency of the development.

Residential - External Aesthetic

The architecture at Ridgeburn will be visually recessive and grounded in rural precedent.

Buildings are simple in form – single or double storey, rectilinear volumes, modest footprints, and rooflines characterised by gables. This composition will avoid excessive articulation or ornamentation, instead relying on proportion and rhythm to create visual interest. Roofs, particularly gable ends will be void of eaves and be clad in non-reflective materials, referencing the utilitarian sheds and homes typical of the area.

Materiality is critical. The houses will be constructed from robust, natural materials, including schist, vertical timber cladding, and corrugated steel. These materials will be left to weather naturally or painted and stained in dark, earthy tones.

All external surfaces - including walls, roofs, joinery, and fencing – will have a Light Reflectance Value (LRV) under 30%, ensuring the architecture blends into the surrounding environment. Colour palettes will be muted and recessive, with a preference for greys, charcoals, browns, and deep reds.

Consistent with a pedestrian-centric vision, and historic precedent, garages and carports will not dominate the street or dwelling. They will be visually and physically secondary—set back from the primary building line, embedded in the terrain where possible, or expressed as a lean-to under a lower gable or mono-pitched roof. Detached garage forms are included where appropriate, especially when they can be treated as modern shed-like structures that reinforce the utilitarian rural character.



Residential - Interiors

Interiors at Ridgeburn will reflect the natural material expression of the exterior.

Walls, floors, and ceilings will be finished in a restrained and natural palette, using timber, plaster, concrete, or stone accents where possible.

Interior spaces will prioritise passive solar gain, low energy consumption, cross-ventilation, and functional flexibility. Generous openings are included at gable ends and in living spaces to bring in daylight and views while maintaining privacy and thermal performance. Shade will be provided for the summer months. High levels of insulation will be included for the Winter months.

A strong indoor-outdoor connection is fundamental.

Primary living spaces will open onto sheltered terraces or courtyards, located under extended gable roofs or covered verandahs. These spaces will feel like integrated extensions of the home rather than additions. Interiors will enable adaptable living across seasons and household types.

Local materials, featuring earthy tones and natural textures will be incorporated seamlessly into contemporary interiors. There will be a range of offerings to suit all budgets and preferences.

Landscape

The Ridgeburn landscape strategy focuses on enhancing the site's natural character and creating a resilient, biodiverse environment.

A mix of native shrubs and trees, typical of the Queenstown Lakes and Otago region, will be used throughout, selected for their ability to thrive in local conditions and support ecological health. These will be complemented by avenues and clusters of exotic trees to provide seasonal interest and structure along key roads.

Planting mixes are tailored to specific landforms—such as gullies, open spaces, and water channels—and include species chosen for erosion control and resilience to frost, drought, and wind.

The overall layout will maintain a sense of informality, with winding roads that follow the natural contours of the land, minimal use of formed kerbs, and natural swale drainage.

Meandering gravel paths and a general absence of fences or defined boundaries will reinforce a sense of openness and connection to the landscape.



Residential Intersection

KEY DESIGN PRINCIPLES

1. Roof Form

Gabled rooflines will define the built form, with simple, traditional volumes reflective of local rural buildings. Garages will be recessive, ideally detached or comprised as lean-tos to the main structure. While individual homes may vary, their collective identity will be consistent, providing a subtle cohesion with the wider context.

2. Visual Recession

All exterior surfaces will use materials and colours with LRVs under 30% to ensure buildings visually recede into the landscape.

3. Material Authenticity

All materials will be durable, natural materials that weather gracefully over time. Synthetic imitations and faux finishes are avoided.

4. Responsive Siting

Buildings will be oriented and placed to follow the natural topography, avoiding excessive cut and fill, and protect view corridors and natural features. Siting and layout should enable long-term adaptability and reinforce the natural structure of the land.

5. Climate Performance

Homes will be designed for passive solar performance, with good orientation, thermal mass, shading, and ventilation.

6. Housing Choice

Ridgeburn will offer a diverse range of housing types to support a resilient, inclusive community. Housing choice will be guided by context, with density and form responding to landform, landscape character, and proximity to key amenities.

7. Landscape Integration

Built form and landscape will work together. Native planting, dry stone walls, and minimal fencing will reinforce the rural setting. The public realm is to be durable, low-maintenance, and designed to enhance both ecological function and community enjoyment.

8. Community and Services

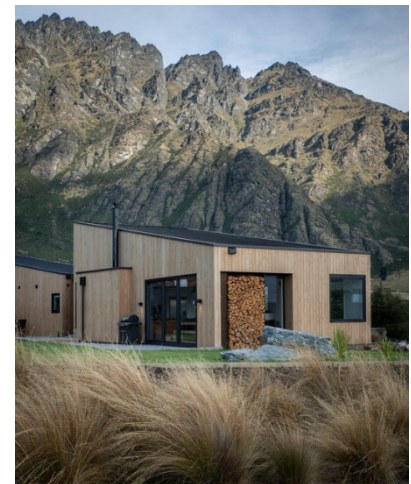
Neighbourhoods will foster a strong sense of community. Spaces and services that support daily life—such as parks, shared gardens, community facilities, walking connections, and local commerce—are essential to a thriving and resilient settlement. The design will encourage interaction, belonging, and wellbeing across all ages and stages of life.

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DESIGN PRECEDENTS

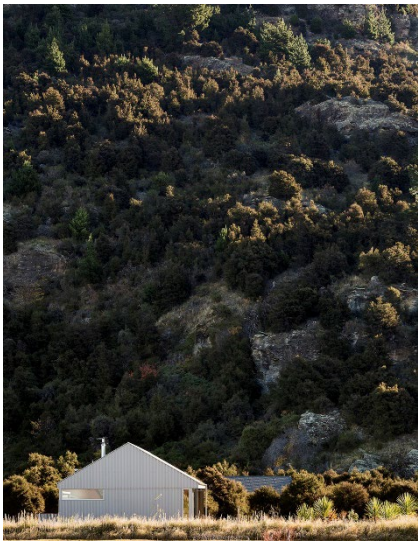
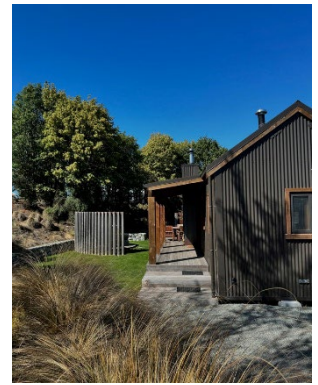
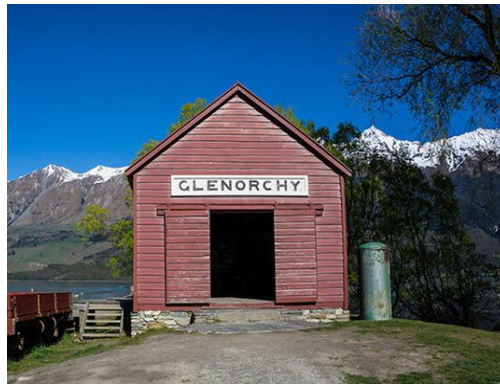


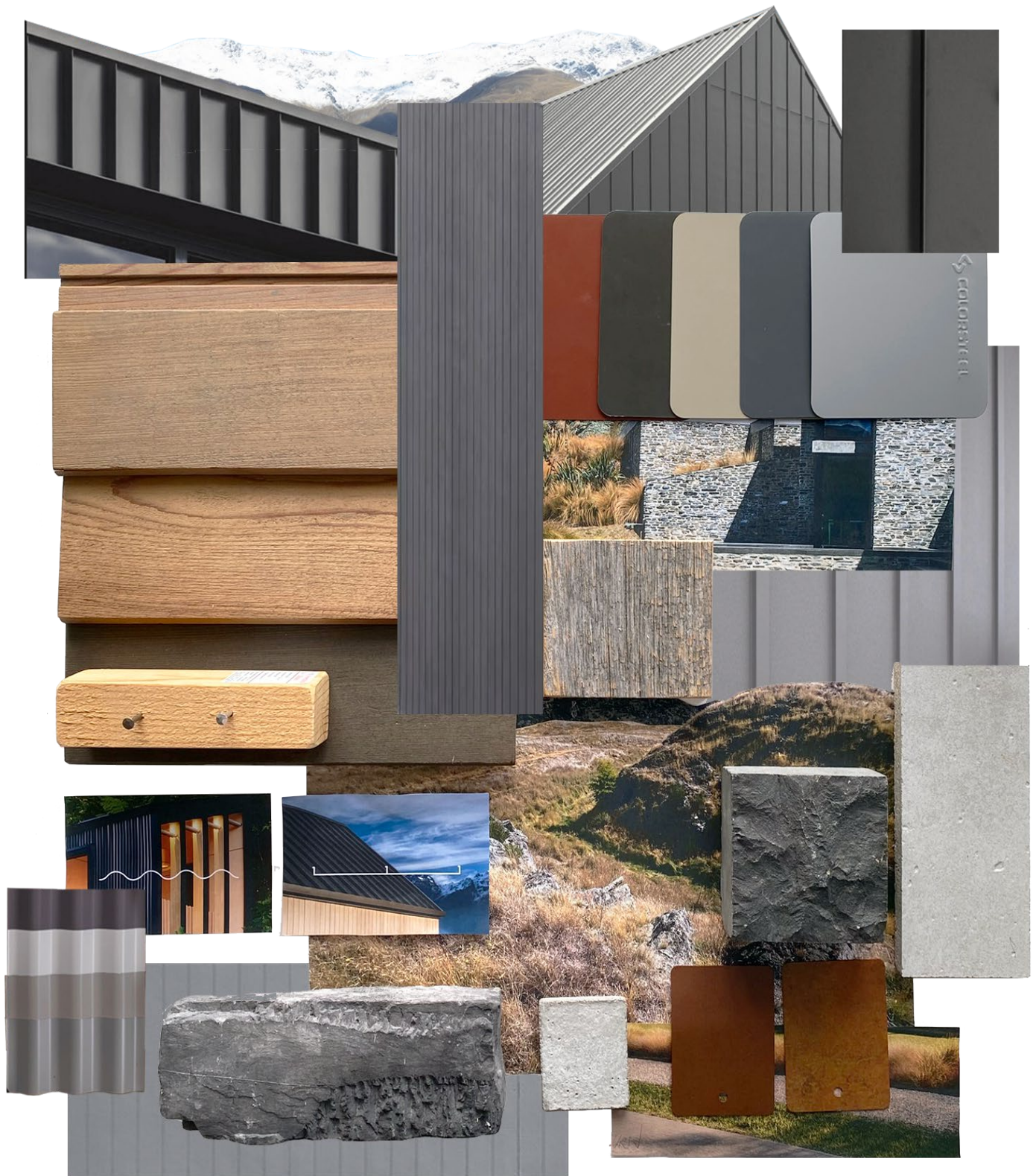
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DESIGN PRECEDENTS



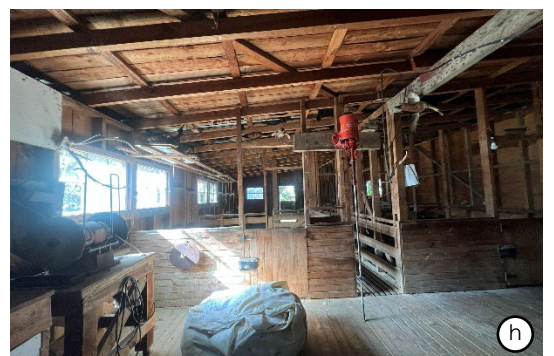


Note: Materials shown are indicative / conceptual only. All material selections are subject to further design development, regulatory approvals, and stakeholder consultation.

EXISTING FARM BUILDINGS



- a. Shearing shed today
- b. Historic image of shearing shed
- c. Interior of "Museum"
- d. Exterior of "Museum"
- e. Historic image of farm house
- f. Farm house today
- g. Multi-bay shed (to be relocated)
- h. Interior of shearing shed





SUMMARY

Ridgeburn Arrowtown Junction is a carefully considered integrated proposal that will create a well-balanced community in the heart of the Queenstown Lakes District.

Designed to meet the growing need for housing in the region, it respects the area's natural and historical context while offering modern living solutions. The plan includes over 1,200 residential lots, along with community facilities, green spaces, and the restoration of key historical buildings.

The design prioritises sustainability and integration with the surrounding landscape, ensuring that new development blends seamlessly with the existing environment.

Ridgeburn will be a vibrant and functional community, one that provides quality living spaces while preserving the area's ecological and cultural values.

Preservation of Heritage: The plan respects and restores several historic buildings and trees, such as a shearing shed, farmhouse, and outbuildings, which will be upgraded and repurposed as community facilities.

Landscape Integration: The design emphasises the conservation of significant landscape features, such as escarpments, hillocks, and schist deposits. The historic water race will be celebrated, and wetlands and overland waterflows will be enhanced for both ecological value and recreational use.

Environmental Sustainability: The community will prioritise sustainability through environmental sensitivity, and integration of natural features into the built environment. Green spaces and water management strategies are key. Simple pitched roofs will provide a good platform for solar panel installations.

Housing and Lot Layout: The development includes over 1,200 lots, which will be carefully arranged to maximise both privacy and community interaction while preserving the scenic views and open spaces.

Housing choice is varied, with a wide spectrum of offerings; including modest, affordable housing, houses for first home buyers, for workers, singles, couples, families, retirees.

The housing and lot layouts will have a light touch on the landscape, blending in to the natural landscape.

Ridgeburn will provide much needed housing for all demographics in the Central Otago community. Helping to address the housing shortage and facilitating growth in the region.

Architectural Design: The architecture will feature gabled roof forms, reflecting the local vernacular and the natural environment. Design elements will be coordinated to create a harmonious streetscape and ensure that new developments complement the existing landscape. Houses are generally low in scale.

Public and Community Spaces: Open spaces, including parks, shared recreation areas, and cultural spaces, are central to the design, providing places for residents and visitors to gather, relax, and enjoy the natural surroundings.

Transport and Accessibility: The masterplan includes a well-connected road and pathway network, prioritising pedestrian and cyclist access, along with transport and recreational solutions that support sustainability.

Ridgeburn has been designed to be a community for all. Providing quality housing for Arrowtown/Queenstown residents.

Yours faithfully



Simon Novak
Director

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