

Lemay / NSDA Architects work on Conference Centre

Lemay Architects from Quebec and NSDA Architects are undertaking a joint venture for the design of a Conference Retreat Centre for the Institute for Research Communication and Development (IRCD) at Britannia Beach. IRCD is a registered charity established in 1985 to promote the pursuit of personal excellence and foster the quest for spiritual and professional growth of both students and adults through educational seminars and workshops based on the teachings of the catholic church.



The Conference Centre will be sited on a sixty-six acre mountainside forest parcel north of the Village of Britannia Beach on the upper slopes above Highway 99. Only a very small portion of the site will be developed with the remaining portion left natural and pristine. The 60,000 sq ft building will contain a chapel, common amenities, classrooms, a conference centre and meeting rooms, indoor and outdoor recreational facilities, a youth pavilion, administrative offices and accommodations for 50 guests.

Sited within a spectacular forested mountainside setting, the conference centre is designed to touch the land lightly. The building nestles into the site along a rocky bluff between major trees and mossy rock outcrops with an organic articulated plan that follows the site contours. A low building

profile and a single-pitch roof form matching the angle of the site deflects the strong winter winds and a large roof overhangs act as a protective umbrella against the heavy rainfall experienced during the fall and winter storms. The internal and external spaces are configured and oriented to take full advantage of the panoramic views of Howe Sound. Exposed concrete and granite stonework used along the base visually ties the structure to the site. Cedar cladding is used as skin material with engineered glulam beams and exposed wood decking for the roof structure. Large panels of glazing and the use of sliding glazed walls establish a transparency and openness and dissolve the distinction between the interior and exterior.