



Surrey, BC:

The Technical University of British Columbia is a new institution which began teaching students in the fall of 1999. Its mandate is to specialize in computer-related studies pertinent to information technology, business management technology and multi-media studies. During the period in which Tech BC is planning and building a permanent campus, it requires the use of various interim facilities to support its growing academic activities. These are housed in Surrey Place Mall in leased space. The permanent campus ("Project One") is currently planned as part of a large mixed-use redevelopment contiguous with the Mall

TechBC retained The Colborne Architectural Group Pacific Inc. in collaboration with Architectura, Planning Architecture Interiors Inc. to undertake the design of the interim facilities as well as their permanent campus at Surrey Place. The Colborne Architectural Group had primary responsibility for the coordination, production and implementation of the design for the 70,000 square foot Interim Facilities project, referred to by the Client as "BetaSpace". This project provides an opportunity to test out some of the programmatic and organizational concepts being considered for Project One; its name reflects this experimental attitude towards both its spatial and cultural intentions.

The BetaSpace project converted approximately 70,000 square feet of former retail space into a fully functional interim university facility. The uses accommodated represent a full cross-section of the intended permanent operation including teaching labs, academic and administrative functions and research labs. As part of the program four fully functional CFI research program labs were created. A major challenge was to provide a fully serviced and highly flexible space at minimum cost, yet in a manner which conveys the vitality of this new high-tech institution. Ordinary materials have been used in unusual and colourful ways to create a working environment which is relaxed and friendly, and a highly flexible system of connectivity allows for user-friendly adjustment.