



Lochaber Mountain Rescue Team is seeking to construct team premises which will take the team into the new Millennium and provide them with a facility which will ensure that those who require the team's assistance get an efficient service that is expected by the general public from the busiest team in Britain. The following information will give an appreciation of why the Team is looking to provide this facility and summarise who we are and what we do. In short, this facility (as illustrated on the 3D images and drawings) is intended to ensure that the Team can efficiently manage it's assets such as the vehicles, the equipment and most importantly our team members to ensure that we can provide a service that will build on the experience and knowledge that has been gained since our inception back in the late 1960's



What is Lochaber Mountain Rescue Team?

LMRT was set up in the late 1960's by local climbers to help fellow climbers in difficulties on the mountains of Lochaber and especially on Ben Nevis. It was and still is today entirely made up of unpaid volunteers with the current membership standing at approximately 40 men and women of various ages from early 20's to early 60's.

What does LMRT do?

At the request of the local police, LMRT attend incidents that are remote from the road side where the normal emergency services are unable to operate with incidents being as varied as rescuing a climber stuck on the sheer North face of Ben Nevis to a canoeist that is stuck in an inaccessible gorge.

Who do we help?

LMRT does not only help climbers and hill walkers although this is the main group who are assisted but we attend incidents involving back country skiers, Cyclists and canoeists who are in a remote area or in an inaccessible location that requires rope-work to extricate them. We are also asked to help co-ordinate and assist in the search for missing persons by the police, whether they have gone missing from their home or while undertaking various other leisure activities such as angling.

What area does LMRT cover?

In general we cover the area of Lochaber district which takes in the small isles of the Inner Hebrides such as Rum, Eigg, Muck and Canna out to the West with Knoydart, the remote and only real wilderness area in Britain forming our North West boundary. From Knoydart our boundary goes east as far as the National Trust land of Creag Meagaidh midway between Fort William and Aviemore. To the South of Creag Meagaidh we take in much of Rannoch Moor including all of Corroul estate and up to the western flanks of Ben Alder. The Southern Border of our area is mainly delineated by the main ridge line of the Mamore hills with Ben Nevis, the highest Mountain in Britain almost in the centre of our area.



What Incidents do we turn out to?

The number of incidents that the team has been attending has been increasing year on year to the current level where we attend between 60 and 70 rescues per year with some of the larger searches, in areas such as Knoydart, taking many days at a time with up to 100 personnel being involved including those members of other teams that are drafted in to help. This high number of incidents unfortunately will only be maintained and possibly increased with the advertising of the area as the Outdoor Capital of the UK. In winter we deal with incidents such as those that are the result of poor navigation due to varying factors such as shorter days, poor weather conditions and tiredness due to the conditions under foot. The winter also sees more of the technical rescues on the north face of Ben Nevis involving long lowers with 2000feet of rope and long nights spent out on the summit. In the summer months we help many people who want to scale Britain's highest mountain via the popular mountain track which every year sees between 70,000 and 100,000 people trying to get to the top and of course back down. These people are often not regular climbers or hill walkers but the general public with all the usual medical problems that would be expected in the population from asthma through to heart problems and other conditions such as diabetes.

Why we need new Premises

A number of years ago our accommodation resided in the Fort William Police station but due to an increase in the requirements for additional accommodation for the police, we were moved out and provided with space that does not suit our needs. Such as, our stores were placed into a garage at the rear while other small rooms were provided on the third floor of the police station and the control and communications equipment is in a busy police control room on the ground floor.

The new site that we have chosen is ideal for our needs in that it is central for our members coming from the different areas of Fort William and Lochaber and has the possibility that we are currently investigating, to provide a dedicated helicopter landing site that would be available all year round and would be reasonably close to our new building. Currently during the summer months we are unable to use the West End car park and are required to travel 4 or 5 miles to get to an area that we can land a helicopter.

The building its' self would provide facilities such as garaging for our vehicles which would allow us to extend the life of the vehicles as they would no longer be kept in the open and exposed to the wet and cold weather and ensure the security of the vehicles and equipment kept inside. To the rear of the garage we would have our stores that would ensure that additional equipment could be moved quickly to the vehicles when required instead of having to take the vehicles up to our store to load up the equipment. The stores would also have facilities for the cleaning and drying of the equipment to ensure that it was ready to be re-used within a very short space of time. Also on this level we intend to have a locker room where personal equipment can be left so that our members can change with toilet and shower facilities on hand at the end of an incident. On

the first floor we would have an incident briefing room where team members and those from other teams can be briefed on the incident with a communications and control room adjacent that will improve the co-ordination of our incidents especially those that involve other agencies such as the RAF, and SARDA dog teams. Other accommodation that would be included are a small kitchen, bunk room for those persons helping out on incidents who have had to travel large distances and a training area where rope lowers can be practiced and perfected.