

Antarctic Heritage Trust Information Sheet

Detaille Island, Base W

Lallemand Fjord, Loubet Coast 66°52'S, 66°48'W

Historic site and Monument No 83



History

- Established in 1956 and closed in 1959.
- Detaille Island (Base W) is a former British Research Station established in 1956. The main areas of study were meteorology, topographical survey and geology
- The base contributed to the science programme of the International Geophysical Year (IGY) in 1957.
- HRH Prince Phillip visited the base in 1957 as part of his tour of the British bases on the Peninsula.
- This was primarily a sledging base but ice was often unstable and field parties were repeatedly cut off from the mainland. Despite difficulties in travel, much was achieved in terms of mapping of the area and understanding the geology.
- The winter freeze in 1958 produced solid sea ice and when the ship attempted to reach the Island in the summer of 1959 it was unable to break through it and reach the base. Despite several attempts, including the help of two American Icebreakers, the British ship was unable to reach the island and supply the base with essential provisions. The decision was made to abandon the base. The men secured the building for winter and took with them only the essential scientific records and personal belongings. They prepared the dog teams and sledged across 25 miles of sea ice to reach the ship.
- Following the base's abandonment, the decision was made to officially close the station in 1959. The essential geology and topographical surveying of the area had already been completed.
- Detaille Island was designated Historic Site and Monument (HSM) No 83 in 2009 and is maintained by the United Kingdom Antarctic Heritage Trust (UKAHT) on behalf of the UK.
- A UKAHT work party made the buildings weatherproof in the 2010 - 2011 Season.

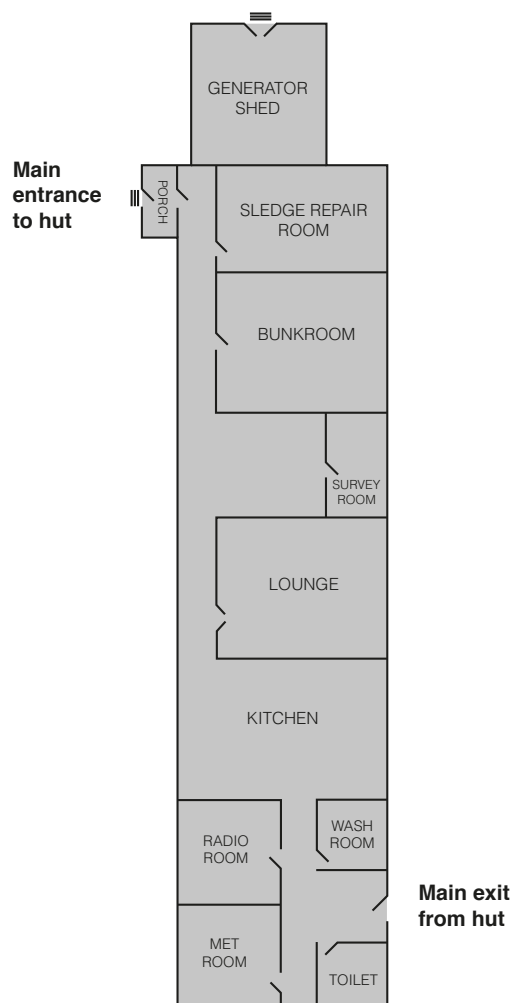
Building and structures guide

The main building is kept unlocked and can be accessed by the main porch on the west side of the building. The side door at the SE side of the building can also be opened and used as the main exit to allow traffic flow through the building.

The building is shuttered to protect the windows from the weather. The shutters can be removed for the duration of the visit to allow light into the building. This is a two person job and requires the use of a ladder. A ladder has been fixed to the wall outside the main side entrance to the West of the hut. It is recommended that you remove only some of the shutters to allow enough light into the building:

- 1 x hall
- 1 x bunkroom
- 1 x lounge
- 1 x kitchen
- 1 x radio room

The two smaller structures on the island are the emergency store (north of the island) and the pup pens (east of the island). Other structures include the anemometer tower and two radio masts (one of which has recently collapsed).



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Please take note of the following during your visit*:

1. Ensure all outdoor clothing and boots are clean before entering the building. Please use the boot scrubber provided.
2. The site is a historic site and monument and therefore overnight stays should not be made. Please do not handle, use or remove any artefacts or sit on chairs and other furniture.
3. Please do not smoke or use matches, candles or stoves in or around the building.
4. Leave a record of your visit in the visitor book and please report any damage to the hut or its contents or maintenance required to the UK Antarctic Heritage Trust: info@ukaht.org
5. A designated cleaning kit is kept in the porch. Please ensure that the hut is clean on your departure and that snow/water is mopped up from the floors.
6. Please ensure that the windows are properly shuttered and the ladder left in place before you leave.
7. Please ensure that the doors are securely closed when you leave.

* For all official guidelines and specific instructions please refer to the Detaille Island Antarctic Treaty Visitor Site Guide

Thank you for visiting!