

BHB Conservancy – Responsible Property Management

Blue Horizon Bay is more than a beautiful coastal village. It is home to sensitive coastal vegetation, indigenous trees, wildlife and marine and littoral habitats that form an important part of our natural environment.

The **Blue Horizon Bay Conservancy** was established to promote and protect this environment and to encourage responsible conservation within our community.

It is important, however, to understand the legal status of the Conservancy.

Is Blue Horizon Bay a Protected Area?

The Blue Horizon Bay Conservancy is **not a formally declared nature reserve or statutory Protected Area**.

It is a community-based conservancy that works with municipal and provincial conservation authorities to protect and preserve the natural environment of Blue Horizon Bay.

This distinction is important.

Being within the Conservancy does not mean that the Conservancy itself creates all the environmental or building restrictions affecting properties in Blue Horizon Bay. Property owners are subject to applicable **municipal, provincial and national legislation and regulations**, irrespective of the Conservancy's community role.

The Conservancy promotes awareness of these requirements and encourages residents and property owners to protect the special environment in which we live.

1. Land Use, Building and Development

Property development in Blue Horizon Bay falls under the planning and building requirements applicable within the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality.

Depending on the proposed development, municipal approval may be required for matters such as:

- New buildings and structures
- Alterations and additions
- Changes in land use
- Rezoning or departures from existing land-use provisions
- Subdivision or consolidation of properties
- Building-line departures

- Certain earthworks and changes affecting drainage or stormwater

Property owners contemplating building or significant alterations are encouraged to establish the applicable requirements with the **Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality before work begins.**

National building regulations and applicable SANS 10400 standards apply to building work.

Because Blue Horizon Bay is a coastal community, matters such as stormwater management, soil stability, erosion and the effect of development on surrounding properties and the environment can be particularly important.

2. Clearing Vegetation and Maintaining Vacant Plots

Clearing a plot in Blue Horizon Bay deserves particular care.

Our village contains indigenous coastal vegetation and protected tree species. Clearing an entire vacant stand without first establishing what vegetation is present can result in protected plants or trees being damaged or removed.

Before clearing a property, owners are encouraged to identify the vegetation present and establish whether any environmental authorisation, permit or licence applies.

Protected trees

Certain indigenous tree species receive legal protection. **Milkwood trees are a particularly important example in Blue Horizon Bay.**

A protected tree may not simply be cut down, damaged or substantially pruned because it is inconveniently positioned on a property. Permission from the appropriate government authority may apply.

Property owners planning to clear vegetation around Milkwoods or other protected species are therefore encouraged to establish the applicable requirements before commencing work.

This protects both the property owner and our natural environment.

3. Coastal Management

Blue Horizon Bay lies along a sensitive and dynamic coastline.

Nelson Mandela Bay has established coastal management lines as part of managing risks associated with coastal erosion, changing shorelines, extreme weather and other coastal processes.

These considerations can affect what may be built and where development may take place, particularly on properties close to the coastline.

Proposed development in environmentally sensitive coastal areas can consequently involve requirements beyond ordinary municipal building-plan approval.

Depending on the location and nature of a proposed development, environmental legislation may apply and an environmental assessment or authorisation may be required.

Property owners considering development close to the coastline are encouraged to establish the environmental and planning requirements applicable to their particular property before committing to a design or commencing site work.

4. Building Responsibly in Blue Horizon Bay

Building in a coastal environment presents challenges that may not exist in less environmentally sensitive areas.

Apart from approved building plans, consideration may be given to:

- Stormwater management
- Soil conditions and foundations
- Prevention of erosion
- Protection of neighbouring properties
- Sewage and wastewater management
- Protection of indigenous vegetation
- Storage of building materials
- Disposal of building waste
- Protection of roads, verges and public open spaces

During construction, building materials and rubble are to be kept under control and public areas, roads and neighbouring properties respected.

The Blue Horizon Bay website contains additional information for property owners regarding building and plot clearing.

5. Public Open Spaces

Blue Horizon Bay contains areas of public open space that contribute significantly to the character and biodiversity of the village.

These areas are not extensions of adjoining private properties.

Residents are encouraged to protect indigenous vegetation in these spaces and refrain from clearing, dumping garden refuse, constructing structures or otherwise altering municipal or public land without the appropriate authority.

Keeping these spaces natural benefits wildlife, protects biodiversity and preserves one of the characteristics that makes Blue Horizon Bay special.

6. The Role of the Blue Horizon Bay Conservancy

The Conservancy's role is primarily one of **conservation, education, community involvement and environmental stewardship**.

It works to:

- Promote the protection of indigenous flora and fauna
- Encourage responsible management of properties
- Preserve sensitive marine, coastal and inland habitats
- Raise awareness of environmental issues
- Work with relevant conservation authorities
- Encourage residents to appreciate and care for our natural surroundings

The Conservancy is therefore not a substitute for the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality or provincial and national environmental authorities.

Where formal approval, environmental authorisation, a licence or building permission is applicable, this comes from the relevant authority.

Before You Clear, Build or Develop

If you own property in Blue Horizon Bay and are considering clearing vegetation, removing or pruning a protected tree, building, renovating or carrying out significant earthworks, **check the applicable requirements before starting**.

A little investigation beforehand can prevent expensive problems later.

More importantly, it allows development and property maintenance to take place while preserving the remarkable natural environment that makes Blue Horizon Bay such a special place to live.

This information is provided as a general guide for residents and property owners. Regulations and environmental requirements can change, and requirements vary according to the property and proposed activity. For formal approval or legal requirements, please consult the relevant municipal, provincial or national authority.