

# Cape St. Blaize Lighthouse

A request to build a lighthouse to serve the burgeoning town of Mossel Bay was first proposed by the Mossel Bay Harbor Board in 1861. Although the appeal was initially rejected, extensive upgrading of the harbor necessitated the provision of additional navigational aids, and permission was eventually granted.

It was decided to locate the lighthouse on top of a rocky headland extending out into the Indian Ocean on the southern side of the bay. It was an ideal position; with a total height of 73 meters (240 feet) above sea level, the lighthouse would be easily visible to ships approaching from any direction. The design was entrusted to Murrell R. Robinson, who succeeded John Scott Tucker as the Colonial Engineer and Commissioner of Roads in the Public Works Department of the Cape Colony in 1863. Robinson was also involved in a number of other projects in the area; the spectacular Robinson Pass (the R328), which links Mossel Bay with Oudtshoorn, was named after him.

The build was awarded to contractor John Goodman, and the Governor of the Cape Colony, Philip Edmond Wodehouse, laid the foundation stone in 1862 whilst on a visit to the Eastern Cape. Construction was completed in November 1863, and the lighthouse was officially commissioned on the 15th of March 1864.

The original lighting apparatus consisted of a fixed red light of the third-order dioptric, which was supplied by W. Wilkins & Co. from London, England. It was replaced with a fourth-order Chance Brothers lens in 1897, a 35 millimeter incandescent vapor burner in 1911, an autoform burner and mantles in 1922, a 500 watt incandescent lamp in 1931, and a 1500 watt incandescent lamp in 1992. The present light source is a 400 watt metal-halide lamp with a maximum intensity of 1,350,000 candelas.

A very interesting natural feature located in the steep cliffs immediately below the lighthouse is a large cave, 72 meters (236 feet) wide and 10 meters (33 feet) high. Archaeological evidence indicates that it has been in continuous use by humanoids for at least 160,000 years. It was first excavated in 1888 by George Leith, then by T. Rupert Jones in 1899, and by A.J.H (John) Goodwin in the 1920s. Both the cave and the lighthouse are excellent elevated vantage points to view the many whales and dolphins that frequent the inshore waters of this rugged coastline.

Cape St. Blaize is one of 5 lighthouses in South Africa which offer onsite accommodation. There is one self-catering cottage, named "Whale's Way", which sleeps a maximum of 6 in 3 bedrooms (1 queen size bed, 4 three-quarter beds, a sleeper couch, as well as an infant cot). It features a living/dining area, a full kitchen, and two bathrooms. All bedroom and bathroom linen is provided.

## Cape St. Blaize Lighthouse Fact File

LSA Number	26
Name	Cape St. Blaize
Province	Western Cape
Location	Mossel Bay
GPS Coordinates	S34.186132 E22.156330 34°11'10.1"S 22°09'22.8"E
ARLHS Number	SAF-010
Admiralty Number	D6378
NGA Number	32192
Active	Yes
First Established	1864
Commission Date	15 March 1864
Decommission Date	Not applicable
Construction Type	Square masonry tower
Daymark	Tower painted white; lantern painted white.
Tower Height	20 meters (66 feet)
Focal Plane	73 meters (240 feet)
Luminous Intensity	1,350,000 candelas
Nominal Range	25 nautical miles
Characteristic	Fl.(2)W.
Period	15 seconds
Pattern	TBC
Pattern Description	2 quick white flashes every 15 seconds.
Manned	Yes
Site Open	Yes
Fenced	Yes
Tower Open	Yes
Accommodation	Yes
Access Method	Car
Access Notes	There is a tarred road (Montagu Street) which leads onto a short (250 meters) stretch of graveled road up to the lighthouse complex.