



NATURAL CHARACTER EVALUATION TABLE

Biophysical Characteristics

Landforms | conspicuous sequence of sheer bluffs, coves and bays. The exposed cliff face reveals a pumice rich volcanic rock that give the cliffs their distinctive white appearance, and is synonymous with much of the adjoining eastern coastline. East of the headland sheer sculpted cliffs jut out into the sea and flank a series of sandy coves and bays.

Vegetation type, Cover & Patterns | largely covered in remnant coastal forest with patches of regenerating coastal scrub and wilding pines interspersed amongst the coastal forest. Windswept coastal scrub and remnant pohutukawa line the coastal edge of Cook Bluff.

Sea / Estuarine Water Bodies | the cliffs maintain a direct and highly expressive interaction with Mercury Bay, providing a dramatic setting that defines the coastal landscape.

Land Uses / Activities / Structure | several large residential houses have recently been established on the northern and western escarpment of Cook Bluff as well as the headland at the northern end of Haihei Beach – this modification negatively impacts of the perceived naturalness of the coastal environment.

Habitat Value | diverse and clearly defined matrix of indigenous forest descending into rocky outcrops and sandy beaches.

Natural Processes | strongly expressed coastal processes are evident in the dramatic interface between the line of cliffs, enclosed beach areas, and the Pacific Ocean. The clear pattern and structure of the landforms is positively reinforced by vegetation patterns.

Rating of Biophysical Characteristics

 Very Low.....Very High

Perceptual Characteristics

Wildness / Wilderness / Remoteness | the absence of development / modification , amalgam of sculpted landforms, windswept and remnant coastal forest / shrub land, the dynamic and obvious natural processes at play along the coastline impart a sense of remoteness and wildness.

Experiential Attributes | the coastal environment incorporates an iconic amalgam of natural elements, coastal features and processes that have a high degree of cohesion, structure, and patterning, as well as considerable diversity. The prominent forested landforms enclosing Cathedral – Gemstone Bay create a sense of intimacy, devoid of human activity.

Context / Setting | part of a broader sequence of distinctive ignimbrite rock features along the coastline. The majority of the headland south of the vegetated escarpment is highly modified. The majority of this modification remains peripheral to the dominate natural elements, patterns, and processes at play within the coastal environment.

Transient / Dynamic Attributes | coastal erosion, tidal processes, seasonal change, atmospheric conditions, and windswept vegetation combine to create a dynamic interplay between this landform and the Pacific Ocean.

Night-time Values | a high degree of naturalness is derived from limited exposure to lights within the unit given the absence of dwellings and structures within.

Rating of Perceptual Characteristics

 Very Low.....Very High

Overall Natural Character Evaluation HIGH
 (Biophysical and Perceptual Values)