



NATURAL CHARACTER EVALUATION TABLE

Biophysical Characteristics

**Landforms** | amalgam of distinctive headlands, sandy beaches, rocky outcrops, islands, bluffs, escarpments and rocky shoals; backed by pastoral rolling hills with moderate relief.

**Vegetation type, Cover & Patterns** | indigenous forest cover on the north facing slopes of Pukewhakatatarata, reflective of underlying topography. The lower coastal slopes north of Kirita Bay contain small pockets of windswept coastal scrub and Pohutakawa which emphasises coastal exposure. Wilding pines are apparent on steep slopes.

**Sea / Estuarine Water Bodies** | the flat expanse of the Firth of Thames interacts with and amplifies the relief of the landform.

**Land Uses / Activities / Structure** | the exposed shoreline imparts a strong sense of naturalness despite the presence of dwellings, roads, power lines, wilding pines, pasture, and fence lines. The quantity of marine farms is starting to have an impact on the intactness of the coastal environment.

**Habitat Value** | complexity of the landform, variety of aspects, vegetation cover and the rocky shore provide a range of habitat types.

**Natural Processes** | dynamic coastal edge with a sequence of bays, islands and points from Kirita Bay to Ohauhunga Bay, expressive of exposure and natural processes.

Rating of Biophysical Characteristics



Perceptual Characteristics

**Wildness / Wilderness / Remoteness** | the units connection with the Firth of Thames, minimal built form, regenerating native forest and expressive landform provide a sense of wilderness.

**Experiential Attributes** | the varied landform in contrast to the flat expanse of the sea and endemic vegetation patterns impart a sense of naturalness.

**Context / Setting** | part of a wider sequence of pastoral hills with regenerating native forest in valleys. Limited presence of buildings and structures imparts a sense of remoteness.

**Transient / Dynamic Attributes** | the landform directly engages with the dynamic ebb and flow of the Firth of Thames and displays ephemeral qualities resulting from atmospheric conditions, variations of day / year and wildlife.

**Night-time Values** | a high degree of naturalness is derived from limited exposure to lights, given the few number of dwellings and structures in the unit. Marine farms, proximity to SH25 and the nearby settlement at Kirita Bay (Smugglers Cove) starts to degrade the perceived intactness of the southern end of the coastal environment.

Rating of Perceptual Characteristics



Overall Natural Character Evaluation

(Biophysical and Perceptual Values)

**HIGH**