

= Roslin Castle =

Roslin Castle (sometimes spelt Rosslyn) is a partially ruined castle near the village of Roslin in Midlothian , Scotland . It is located around 9 miles south of Edinburgh , on the north bank of the North Esk , only a few hundred metres from the famous Rosslyn Chapel .

There has been a castle on the site since the early 14th century , when the Sinclair family , Earls of Caithness and Barons of Roslin , fortified the site , although the present ruins are of slightly later date . Following destruction during the War of the Rough Wooing of 1544 , the castle was rebuilt . This structure , built into the cliffs of Roslin Glen , has remained at least partially habitable ever since . The castle is accessed via a high bridge , which replaced an earlier drawbridge . Roslin was renovated in the 1980s and now serves as holiday accommodation .

= = History = =

The first castle was built in either the late 14th or in early 15th century , perhaps begun by Henry Sinclair , Earl of Orkney , Baron of Roslin (c . 1345 ? 1400) . The Sinclair , or St Clare , family were of French origin , and have held Roslin since 1280 . The castle was built on a rocky promontory near the site of the Battle of Roslin , where the Scots defeated the English in 1303 . Henry 's son Henry , 2nd Earl of Orkney (c . 1375 @-@ 1422) built a new rectangular , round @-@ cornered keep at the south @-@ west corner . The courtyard was entered via a drawbridge over an artificial ditch , giving access to a pond in the small north range .

The castle contained a scriptorium during the 15th century , and five St Clair manuscripts , dating back to 1488 , are in the National Library of Scotland . These include the Rosslyn @-@ Hay manuscript , believed to be the earliest extant work in Scots prose . The castle was damaged by a domestic fire in 1452 . Legend has it that during the domestic fire the Earl was in consternation because of his valuable manuscripts but they were lowered to safety from a window by his chaplain .

Roslin was more severely damaged by the Earl of Hertford , who burned the castle during the War of the Rough Wooing in 1544 . The keep was almost totally destroyed , although its one remaining ruined wall can still be seen .

The castle was rebuilt in the late 16th century . A new five @-@ storey east range was built into the side of the rock , and the gatehouse was rebuilt , this time with a permanent stone bridge . The upper part of the east range was renovated in 1622 , with renaissance details and carving to door and window surrounds . Roslin suffered again from the artillery of Cromwell 's commander in Scotland , General Monck , in 1650 . It was further damaged by a Reforming mob in 1688 . By the 18th century the structure was dilapidated , though part of the east range has always remained habitable .

James Erskine inherited the Rosslyn and Dysart estates in 1789 , from his cousin James Paterson St Clair , upon which he adopted the surname of St Clair @-@ Erskine . In 1805 , he inherited the title of Earl of Rosslyn (created 1801 for Alexander Wedderburn) ; since that date , the Rosslyn estate has been in possession of the Earl of Rosslyn .

From 1982 to 1988 the east range was restored by architects Simpson and Brown . The current owner , the Earl of Rosslyn , a descendant of the Sinclairs , leases the castle as holiday accommodation via the Landmark Trust . The castle is a Scheduled Ancient Monument , and a Category A listed building .

= = Architecture = =

The castle stands precipitously above a loop of the River North Esk , which protects it on three sides . This rocky promontory was breached on the north side to form a ditch giving further protection . The castle is approached from Roslin across this ditch , via a precipitous bridge and through the ruined gatehouse .

=== Ruins ===

The remains of the gatehouse and north range comprise only fragments of walls and one side of the entrance arch , with the remains of a bartizan above . Along the west side of the castle , the 15th @-@ century curtain wall remains standing to a considerable height . This section of wall has six openings at the base , one of which served as a postern gate . On the outer face , the six bays are divided by rounded buttresses . Old sketches of Roslin show bartizans above each of these buttresses , with a wall @-@ walk connecting them .

To the south of this wall is the remaining wall of the keep . The mound beneath is formed from the collapsed remnants of the other three walls . The ruin suggests that the keep was around 16m by 12m , with walls 2.9m thick rising to a machicolated parapet .

=== East range ===

The restored east range measures around 31m by 10m , with a pitched roof and crow @-@ step gables . It is entered through a richly carved doorway , dated 1622 and initialled SWS for Sir William Sinclair , which gives access to the third floor . The three lower floors are cut into the rock , and each has four vaulted rooms , with a fifth in the south @-@ east tower . These lower levels were used for service rooms , with the principal rooms in the two upper floors . At the lowest level was a kitchen , with a bakehouse above . On the exterior , gunloops are found on the south wall , with several shot @-@ holes on the east .

All five floors are connected by a central scale @-@ and @-@ platt staircase , added in the early 17th century to replace a turnpike stair in the south @-@ west . The rooms of the upper floors have impressive panelling and decorated ceilings . The main hall , in the south part of the block , has been divided , but retains a large fireplace with the carved initials WS and JE , for William Sinclair and his wife Jean Edmonstone , and the date 1597 .

== Cultural references ==

Roslin Castle is one of the places featuring in Sir Walter Scott 's poem Rosabelle . A ballad named Roslin Castle was written in the 18th century by Richard Hewitt of Cumberland , the lyrics and music of which are recorded in volume one of the Scots Musical Museum collection of Scottish songs . The castle was also used as a location for Ron Howard 's film adaptation of Dan Brown 's book , The Da Vinci Code .