The rampart of the fort all along Salisbury Bank runs from the cliff edge.

Aerial view of the Salisbury Crags, Samson’s Ribs, Arthur’s Seat and Holyrood Park. The monuments to the left of Arthur’s Seat and Salisbury Crags are visible from a distance.

The earliest evidence for man’s presence in the park comes from archaeological excavations that have uncovered evidence of human activity dating back more than 8,000 years. The earliest artefacts discovered in the park include Neolithic flint and stone tools, indicating that the area was occupied by early humans. These tools were found in a number of locations throughout the park, including on Salisbury Crags, Samson’s Ribs, and Arthur’s Seat.

The most recent archaeological remains to be found in the park are associated with the use of the site as a mining area. The park was once a major centre of the mining industry, with a number of large quarries on Salisbury Crags, and large-scale extraction of stones from the area. The most significant extraction was from the Camstone Quarry, on the back slope of Holyrood Park, which was opened in 1846 and operated until 1987. The park is currently managed by Historic Scotland, and the majority of the park’s stone extraction is now for use as building materials.

Today, Holyrood Park is a popular area for recreation, with a network of paths and tracks for walking, cycling, and horse riding. The park also includes a number of significant historical sites, including Holyrood Palace and the Palace of Holyroodhouse. The park is open to the public all year round, and is a popular destination for visitors to Edinburgh.
The earliest records of the land that now falls within Holyrood Park show that in the early 12th century it was divided between royal demesne land and the estates of three nobles: Duddingston, Trevelyan (Duddingston), and the White. With the foundation of Holyrood Abbey in 1128, David I granted demesne lands to the Augustinian canons, and Uviet endowed the Abbey with part of Arthur’s Seat. From the outset, Holyrood Abbey provided a royal guesthouse for the king and his court, and its proximity to central Edinburgh meant that it was increasingly used as a royal residence.

In the early 13th century, King John ‘the Good’ of France granted the Abbey a charter for the use of the park, which was later confirmed by King Robert II in 1378. From this time, the park was used as a royal pleasure ground, and it continued to be so until the early 16th century, when it was enclosed by a stone wall.

After the annexation of the monastic lands in the late 16th century, Holyrood reverted to the Crown. In 1646, while still Crown property, the park was transferred to the management of Sir James Hamilton of Prestonfield House, and remained in the care of his family and the Earl of Haddington for the next two and a half centuries. The increasing unpopularity of the quarrying of Salisbury Crags led to the Crown reasserting control in 1846, and during Victoria’s reign, Queen’s Drive, Dusky Pike and Loch were built. Further areas have been added to the park since 1946, in particular the grounds to the east of the Palace and Abbey, the Parish Grounds, acquired in the late 19th century. The present boundary was completed in 1959 with the gift of the ground to the east of Duddingston Loch.

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**Legend**

- Boat
- Park
- House boundary (within park)
- Woodland
- Cove
- Car park
- Information board
- Pedestrian access point

**Archaeological Features**
- Fortified wall
- Fortified wall (line of)
- Structure
- Rifle range feature
- Field back and embankment

Scale 1:5000

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