

A brief History of Gurrs Croft

The building sits in the parish of Keymer and Hassocks, it is on the outskirts of the lands within Ockley Manor and is not considered part of the manor estate. It is on the west side of Ockley Lane that runs from the village to Burgess Hill towards Ditchling and then Brighton. On the hill above it stands Oldland Mill, an 18th century structure, recently restored and now the property of the Sussex Archaeological Trust. There is no evidence that Gurrs Croft is linked to the manor, it sits outside of the boundaries of the manor which has it's own workers cottages and farm buildings. Furthermore, the historic maps show the property isolated from the rest of the estate and only connected by the common road. Ordnance Survey maps indicate that it was likely part of the Newland Farm estate buildings and may have been lived in by James Turner, who "by 1890 was miller and farmer at both Newland and Oldland, and by now was living in Gurr's Croft"*

Keymer is a long narrow parish, 10 miles north from Brighton, in the Eastern division of the county, Cuckfield union and county court district, hundred of Buttinghill, rape, archdeaconry and rural deanery of Lewes, and diocese of Chichester The main part of the parish has an elevation of little over 100 ft., but it rises in the south, extending in a long, narrow strip up the side of the South Downs to a height of over 700 ft. and continuing for a short distance beyond the crest of the hill. The village is in the centre of the parish, where the road from Lewes to Hurstpierpoint crosses that from Burgess Hill to Lodge Farm. The church is to the north-east of the cross-roads. Few of the houses are ancient. A timber-framed cottage, now called 'Old Thatch', may be of the 16th century; the Greyhound Inn has a few old ceiling-beams and a wide fire-place bearing the date 1595; and 'The Old Manor House' is probably of the early 17th century. Around the railway station of Hassocks, on the line from London to Brighton, much building development is taking place.

Ockley Manor, an early-18th-century house of red brick with rusticated stone angle-dressings, and possessing a contemporary brick dovecote, is on the east side of the road running from the village to Burgess Hill; and on the hill above it stands Oldland Mill, ([fn. 2](#)) an 18th century structure, recently restored and now the property of the Sussex Archaeological Trust.

In 1894 the portion of the civil parish within the Urban District of Burgess Hill was constituted a civil parish called Keymer Urban. In 1934 a detached portion of the parish was transferred to Cuckfield Rural.

A Congregational Church was built at Hassocks in 1885.

The soil of the parish is loam and sand, except the downland, which is chalk, and the subsoil is sand and clay. The principal crops are wheat, oats, barley, peas, and turnips.

There is no specific mention of the property now known as Gurrs Croft in the historic documentation on file

'Parishes: Keymer', in *A History of the County of Sussex: Volume 7, the Rape of Lewes*, ed. L F Salzman (London, 1940), *British History Online* <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/sussex/vol7/pp179-181> [accessed 9 June 2026].

Maps dating back to the late 19th Century indicate a property was in place at the time, there is no detailed drawing available to show the aspect of the property or indicate the materials used to build it (see separate document for detailed maps)

The property has clearly evolved and changed as it has been developed to meet the needs of various residents over time and incorporates fabrics from C17 to C21. The Historic England listing makes clear that the original building is considered to be a 17th century dwelling, and that in the 19th century an addition of a bay window was installed. Further surveys of the house indicate that the structure to the left of the C17 building was added at some point in the 19th or 20th century. It is interesting to note that the English heritage listing only refers to two windows, even a quick visual inspection will show that there are many more windows of various styles and presumably not considered of significant historic value. The building has also evolved further in the 21st century with an additional lean-to style conservatory, most likely added sometime around 2011.

Gurrs Croft was sold in January 2026 and the current owner is now preparing this program of changes with the intention of retaining the historically significant structure of the building and revising some of the modern additions to ensure that the building maintains its suitability as a residential property for the next generation to be able to use. The work will have no impact on the setting or the exterior aspect of the building as work will either be limited to the interior, or maintenance of external features using a like-for-like method.

* [James Turner – ~Oldland Mill Trust~](#) n.b. this is contradicted by other local historical evidence and is only considered notable for linking Gurrs Croft to the Turner family “[only after his mother's death in 1847 could Thomas afford to live at Oldland. He finally sold it and moved to Tunbridge Wells in 1863](#)”