

INIGO



Little Crank

DITCHLING COMMON, EAST SUSSEX

£620,000 FREEHOLD

Little Crank is a Grade II-listed three-bedroom cottage built c. 1910 on the edge of Ditchling Common, just north of Ditchling in East Sussex. The house originally formed the outbuildings for the larger adjoining Hopkins Crank house, which was once home to the sculptor Eric Gill. Complete with its own garage and extensive west-facing garden and studio, Little Crank has been redecorated with an astute eye, striking the perfect discerning balance between its historic bones and comfortable, contemporary living.

Setting the Scene

Ditchling Common Country Park – which lies just opposite the house – is a 188 acre biological Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) in East Sussex. It boasts woodlands, open grassy areas, lakes, bluebell walks in springtime and splendid views towards the South Downs, all linked by a network of walking paths.

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Little Crank is nestled between its two adjoining counterparts – the main house of Hopkins Crank, and Crank Barn, which at one time served as the dairy and workshop for the owner, the sculptor, typeface designer and printmaker Eric Gill (1882 – 1940). Gill lived at Hopkins Crank from 1917 to 1924, during which time he founded the Christian Workers' Guild, which is still in existence and has its workshops in the adjoining road, Folder's Lane, Burgess Hill. Although the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography describes Gill as "the greatest artist-craftsman of the 20th century: a letter-cutter and type designer of genius", his 1989 biography brought to light Gill's abuse of his adolescent daughters ([link](#)).

The Grand Tour

Little Crank is serviced by a shared driveway just opposite the Ditchling's namesake common, leading to pea shingle courtyard to the front entrance. Extensively restored in 2024, the roof that crowns the building's white-rendered profile is steeply pitched and formed of a combination of plain and fish-scale tiles. Angled gables lend a characterfully cottage feel.



An arched open porch entrance and glazed powder-blue front door leads directly into the bright flagstone hall, with its timber beams and 'Hay'-washed walls. An intriguingly inscribed fragment of stone, thought to be Eric Gill's work, is laid at the foot of the stairs, while a wood-burning stove is positioned in a corner.

The living room lies to the south of the plan. A cosy space well-fed with light, it has delightful garden views, hearty engineered oak floorboards and plenty of space for displaying books.

On the opposite side of the hall lies the kitchen, the subject of a recent renovation by the current owners in partnership with Retrouvius. Bespoke Iroko cabinetry lines the walls, with open shelving and pastel-coloured tiles above. Practicalities have been considered, with Siemens integrated appliances and a wooden-panelled dishwasher unit. An impressive ceramic scullery sink has been thoughtfully fitted beneath a courtyard-facing window.

A ground-floor shower room-cum-utility has been introduced by the current owners and sits adjacent to the garden door for easy access.

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Atop the beautifully crafted oak staircase are the house's three bedrooms, all with soft woollen carpets underfoot. The principal bedroom is dual-aspect with light pouring in from both sides. It has ample built-in cupboard storage and its own bathroom with polished floorboards.

A second bedroom is characterised by pitched ceilings and charming 12-paned windows overlooking the garden, with bespoke panelled cupboard storage. The third bedroom is smaller and ideal for a child's bedroom or indeed a dressing room, with its Jack-and-Jill door leading directly into the primary bedroom's en suite bathroom.

The Great Outdoors

An expansive lawned garden offers open patches for playing, picnicking or relaxing on a bright afternoon; it also has a patio area perfect for outdoor dining. Mature bushes and fruit trees dot the perimeter, while rolling farmland beyond lends a particularly atmospheric view.

Complete with electricity, a summerhouse sits in one corner of the gardens and is used as a workspace by the present owners.

Out and About

The historic village of Ditchling lies just over two miles to the south and is well known for its daily community life and culture. It hosts all the daily amenities such as a post office, an art gallery, Ditchling Museum of Art and Craft (featuring Gill), two pubs, a health centre and a pharmacy.

Activities on offer are varied: Ridgeview Wine Estate is a walk away, while Plumpton Racecourse is within a 10-minute drive of Little Crank and there is sailing from nearby Brighton Marina. The chalk hills that comprise the South Downs National Park are a few miles away for access to glorious walking trails and bridleways throughout the year.

Ditchling St Margarets, Hassocks Infants and The Windmills Junior School in Hassocks, as well as St Lawrence in Hurstpierpoint are all well regarded community primary schools in the area. Secondary schools of note are Downlands in Hassocks and Chailey School in Chailey as well as the independent schools of Burgess Hill for Girls and Hurstpierpoint College, with Brighton College and Ardingly College also within easy reach.

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The larger town of Burgess Hill is a five-minute drive or 35-minute walk from the cottage to the west, with more extensive facilities including a well-serviced railway station with direct routes into London Victoria in 50 minutes. Gatwick airport is a 30-minute drive from the house, while Brighton and Hove are only 10 or so miles to the South.

Council Tax Band: D

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About

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