

**CHELMSFORD CITY COUNCIL**  
**MARGARETTING**

**KILLIGREWS**  
(formerly Killigrews, Shenfeld,  
Shenfield, or Shenvills)

**TL 688 027**

Early Tudor house surrounded by a moat which has sixteenth century brick walls. The garden has late nineteenth century and early twentieth century features.

### **HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT**

Shenfield (now Killigrews) was originally a manorial name for the messuage held by William de Shenefelde in 1279. Morant, the County historian, writing in 1768, says that the earliest that is known as to the ownership of the estate is that it belonged to the family of Gedge or Gage. From them it passed to the Harrys or Herris family at the beginning of the sixteenth century. The Harrys family, after enjoying it for many generations, sold it to Robert Wood, a mathematician, from whose heirs it descended to the Alexanders.

The moated manor house was built by John Berdefeld/Bardfield (1477-1514). Some of the walls are of early sixteenth century and the moat is rectangular and revetted on the inner face with early sixteenth century brick walls. At the North West and south west angles are early sixteenth century octagonal brick turrets, with moulded plinths and elaborate cappings, forming a type of pinnacle. Cruciform loops in the outer faces of each turret, inner face has doorway with four-centred. Morant said that the moat was crossed by a draw-bridge, but this has now disappeared. In its place is a solid modern bridge of timber and brickwork.

Killigrews is marked as 'Shenfelde on the map of Essex drawn by John Norden in 1594; as 'Shenfeld' on John Speed's map 1610 of Essex,; as 'Shenfield' on Joannes Blaeu's 1645 map: as 'Shenvills' on Chapman and André's map of the County, published in 1777; and as 'Shenvils' on Mudge's Ordnance Survey map published in 1805; and on Charles and John Greenwood's 1825 map of Essex the house is referred to as 'Shenvils'. On the 1st edition 25" Ordnance Survey map (1862-1876) the house is named 'Killigrews'. and it continues with this name on the modern Ordnance Survey maps. The old name 'Shenfields' was discarded, apparently, about 1830. This was probably to avoid confusion with the parish of Shenfield only seven miles away.

In Britton and Brayley's 1777 Beauties of Britain – Essex the house is referred to as 'Shenfield Hall' with the description that 'the house lay in a bottom, had many large buildings about it, and was surrounded by a moat with a drawbridge'. From Excursions in Essex (Vol I 1818) 'Shenfield House is said to have been one of those to which Henry VIII used to resort for the indulgence of his private pleasures. This house, situated in a bottom, was surrounded by a moat, and had a drawbridge, at the extremity of which were two strong watch-towers of brick. It had likewise a chapel adjoining. It covered a considerable spot of ground, but most of the original buildings have long been taken down.'

The house received a new front early in the eighteenth century and a new west wing was added in the twentieth century.

About 1845 Killigrews was purchased by John Attwood, who added it to the Hylands estate. On 22 March 1854 Killigrews was advertised for sale as part of the Hylands Park Estate. According to the 1854 sales particulars (ERO SALE/B5167) Killigrews at that time comprised 242 acres. The estate was referred to as Killigrew Farm and was in the occupation of Mr Thomas Hodges. The seven bedroomed house was surrounded by an ancient moat: also included in the sale were the barns, piggery, cow house, bullock house, granary, and a chaise house with brew house attached.

Miller Christy, in his article on Killigrews in the Transactions of the Essex Archaeological Society 1916, described the general layout of the estate, with its broad moat and corner turrets, as 'having been one of those semi-fortified manor houses which were built in England during the Wars of the Roses, or shortly after their close, when, owing to the extremely disturbed state of the country, no gentleman's seat was considered safe without certain defensive works'. Miller Christy also wrote 'that the moat was roughly ninety yards square and fed by land springs, the surplus water draining into the river Wid. Each side of the moat was forty or fifty feet wide. Between the main moat and the river was an enclosure, now an orchard, about an acre in extent, surrounded by a second, but much narrower, moat. At one time, the approach to the house was by a drive which crossed the bridge and ran straight for about a quarter of a mile, before it joined the 'Great Road', but since the building of the Great Eastern Railway, which crosses the line of this old drive, it has been done away with, and a new drive has been made a little more to the northward, joining the 'Great Road' close to the corner of Hylands Park. The small island-garden immediately surrounding the house has all the charm which only an old garden, tended with care by a gardener possessing both means and good taste, can ever acquire. In spring its lilacs, climbing roses, and laburnums overhang the old brick walls of the moat and are reflected in the water below. A very old filbert tree, one of a row, has probably a larger bole than any other in existence, having a circumference of about three feet. In the front, a very thick hedge of large clipped box trees, probably several centuries old, lines the walls of the moat; and, in chinks of these ancient walls, grow a profusion of wallflowers, snap dragons, pellitory, and other wall loving plants. Outside the house moat are other gardens, orchards, kitchen gardens and outhouses.'

In 1920 Killigrews was sold as part of the Hylands Estate. The sales particulars (ERO D/F 33/4/70 19 December 1920) refer to the garden as being a 'delightful old-world garden, artistically laid out, a feature being the rhododendrons and other flowering shrubs, the yews, boxwood trees, etc., rose walk, bowers, rock garden, tennis lawns and conservatory. There is an excellent kitchen garden, for the most part walled in, well stocked with choice selection of fruit trees. The orchard is similarly stocked. The residence is well screened by a belt of trees and shrubs and at the entrance to the carriage drive stand a pair of well-built and slated lodges' Killigrews was at this time let to R.C. Morgan, Esq. on a lease for a term of 14 years from 25 March 1913. The size of the estate in 1920 was 21 acres.

## **SITE DESCRIPTION**

### **LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM AND SETTING**

Killigrews stands on the boundary between the parishes of Widford and Margaretting. About three miles from the stations of both Chelmsford and Ingatestone, it lies nearly half a mile to the east of the great Roman road from London to Colchester, and on very low ground beside the small stream known as the Wid, which here divides the parishes of Widford and Margaretting from that of Chelmsford.

### **ENTRANCES & APPROACHES**

At one time the approach to the house was by a shorter drive which, leaving the front of the house, crossed the bridge and ran straight for about a quarter of a mile, when it joined the A414; but, since the building of the Great Eastern Railway which crosses the line of this old drive, it has been abandoned, though traces of it are still obvious, and a new drive has been made a little more to the north, joining the A414 near the corner of Hylands Park.

### **PRINCIPAL BUILDINGS**

Killigrews is listed by English Heritage as Grade II\*. Originally an early sixteenth century moated manor house built by John Berdefield, the house was refronted in red brick and altered in 1714 by William Alexander of Shenfield. In the twentieth century a wing was added to the east side, in eighteenth century style matching the west block.

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Site visit: Jill Plater 2009 (Red Cross open garden)