

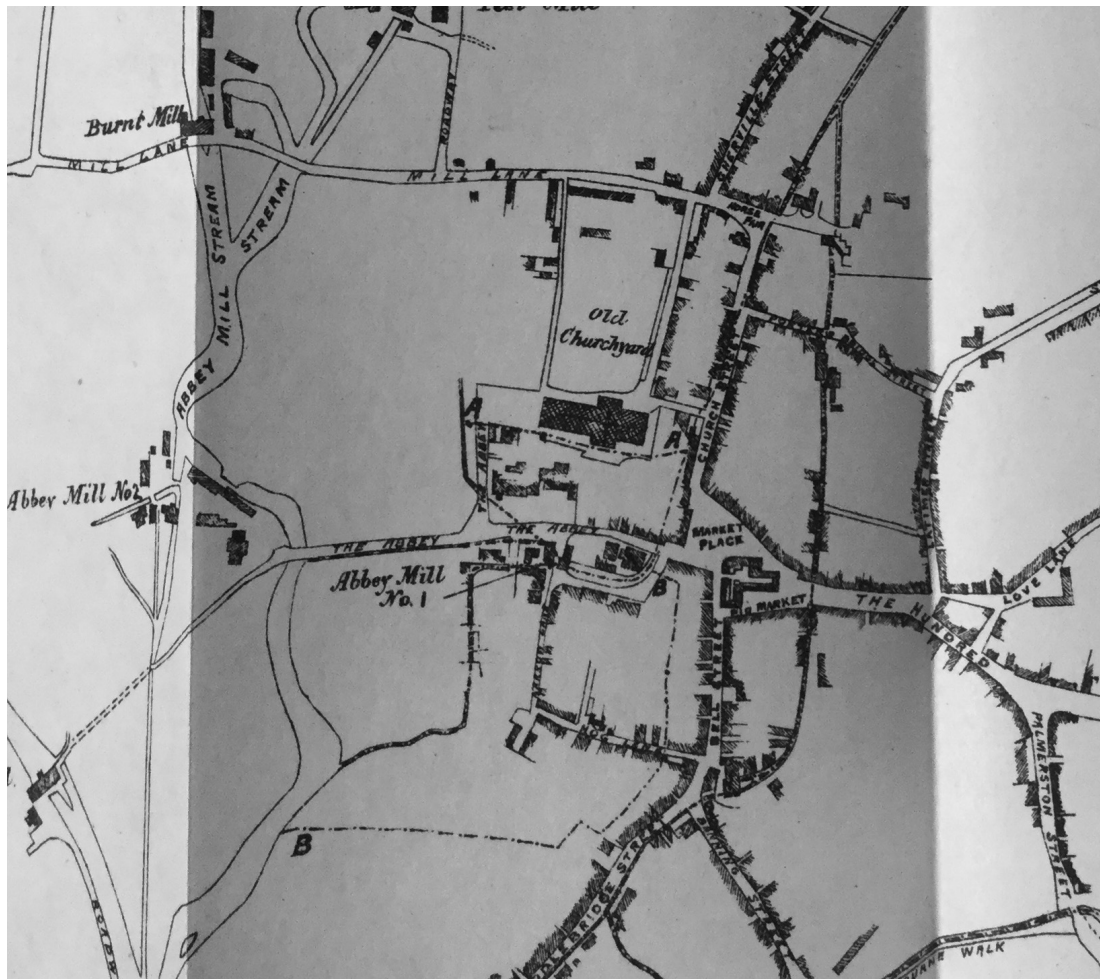


It is very noticeable from a glance at a map or a stroll around the town centre that the properties on the west side of the Market Place are out of alignment with their neighbours to the north. We have concluded, perhaps assumed, that this represents an encroachment on an open space at the heart of the town. I would like to suggest a possible alternative. These properties are approximately in line with the channel excavated behind the former Creatures Pet Shop west of the Town Hall. Are we looking at a boundary that predates Church Street? Is this the edge of the Abbey precinct marked out by the original course of the Fishlake?









Above is a section of a map drawn in 1899. It illustrates a paper by Edward Buckell on 'The Old Water Courses and Mills of Romsey' (HFC, Vol. 4). The dot-dash lines mark the location of various ditches mentioned in the text. These carried water from the Fishlake. The ditch running parallel to Bell Street could follow the original course of the Fishlake as it flowed south towards the edge of the terrace. The diversion of the water further north fits the archaeological evidence of an infilled section of the channel behind Creatures. Was the Fishlake rerouted in order to develop properties adjacent to the Market Place?