

CHERTSEY

CONSERVATION AREA

Cerotusege

'The Island of Cerotus'

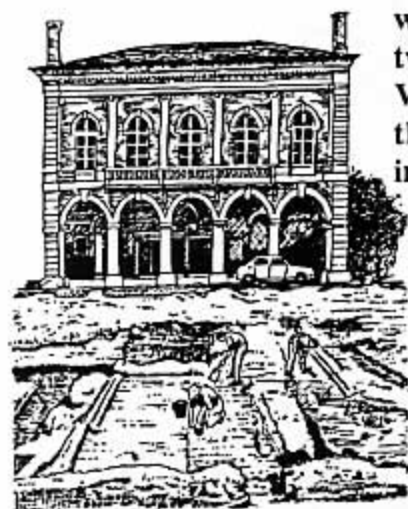


Rocque's map of 1768 shows Chertsey probably little altered in size from the medieval period.

The development of Chertsey was originally due to its status as an island, surrounded by marsh and the Thames and its tributary streams. Cerotus is a mystery: a notable person in that shadowy period after the end of Roman Britain of whom no further record survives.



In the 19th Century the Swan was a well known coaching inn. The drawing shows it before extensive alterations in the 20th century left only the right hand portion unaltered.



Archaeological excavation before the construction of Heriot Way demonstrated the 12th century origins of the town. On the opposite side of London Street is the town hall, built in 1851 to George Briand's Renaissance style design.

In 666AD a famous monastery was established, and, despite twice being pillaged by the Vikings, it survived to become the wealthiest religious house in Surrey. The monks were responsible for the establishment of the town in the 12th century. The town was carefully planned, and archaeological excavations have suggested that it was surrounded by a ditch.

The town was a centre for trade for the local area, but seems not to have expanded much beyond its medieval limits until the 19th century. Its economy was based on agriculture and, also later, market gardening. Tile and brick-making was an important industry in the area from the 13th to the 20th centuries.



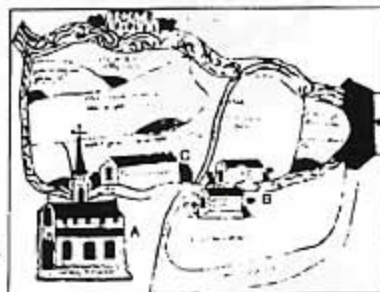
A notable characteristic of historic town centres is the way in which the shop fronts at ground level show a uniformity which is in considerable contrast to the variety at higher levels. Here the late 18th century mansard roof (centre) is especially interesting.



The wide crossroads in front of St. Peter's Church has always been the market area of the town. The market house was built in 1599 and demolished in 1809. The drawing is based on a watercolour attributed to Sir John Soane.

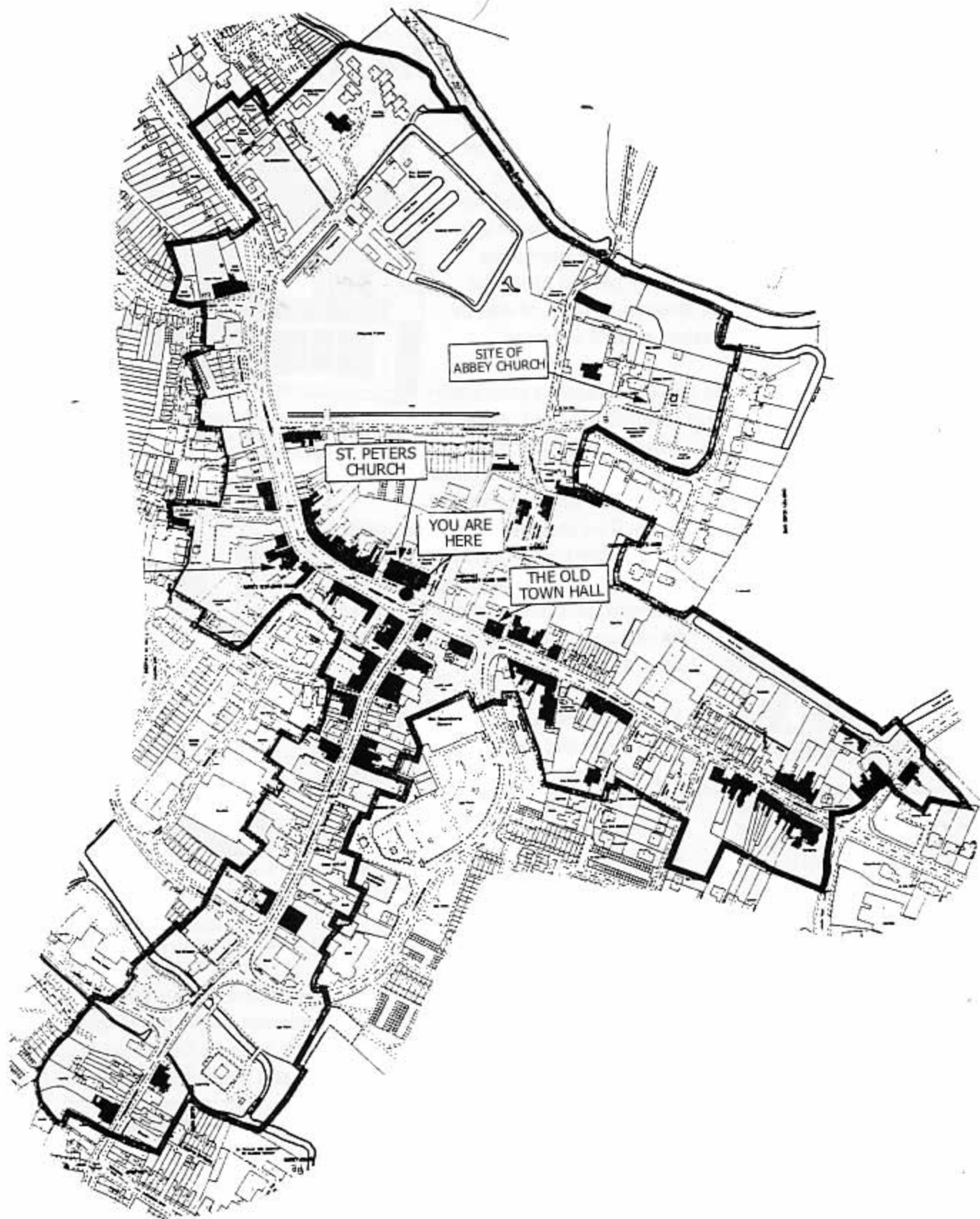
The Abbots of Chertsey had a residence in London and the capital has continued to be important to the development of the town. In the early 18th century it became fashionable for the gentry to live away from London, and a number of fine buildings in Chertsey belong to this period.

In 1848 the railway station was opened, and the possibility of quick and regular communication with London was largely responsible for the subsequent expansion of the town.



A 15th century map of the precinct of Chertsey Abbey. The map is diagrammatic but shows, amongst other things, the church (A), the mills (B) and the great barn (C) of the Abbey.

Chertsey has seen many changes in recent years. Its historic centre has, though, been little altered, and remains full of character, eminently deserving its status as a Conservation Area.



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