

Oxford Mail

Pam's plea for memorial for Oxford's 'missing' martyr

Andy Ffrench



A HISTORIAN has renewed calls for Oxford's first religious martyr to be honoured with a memorial at the redeveloped railway station.

Radical plans to transform the station are contained in a supplementary planning document and could be finalised as early as this autumn.

Now medieval historian Pam Manix is calling for a memorial at the place where Oxford's 'missing martyr' died in 1222, possibly on the concourse of the new station itself.

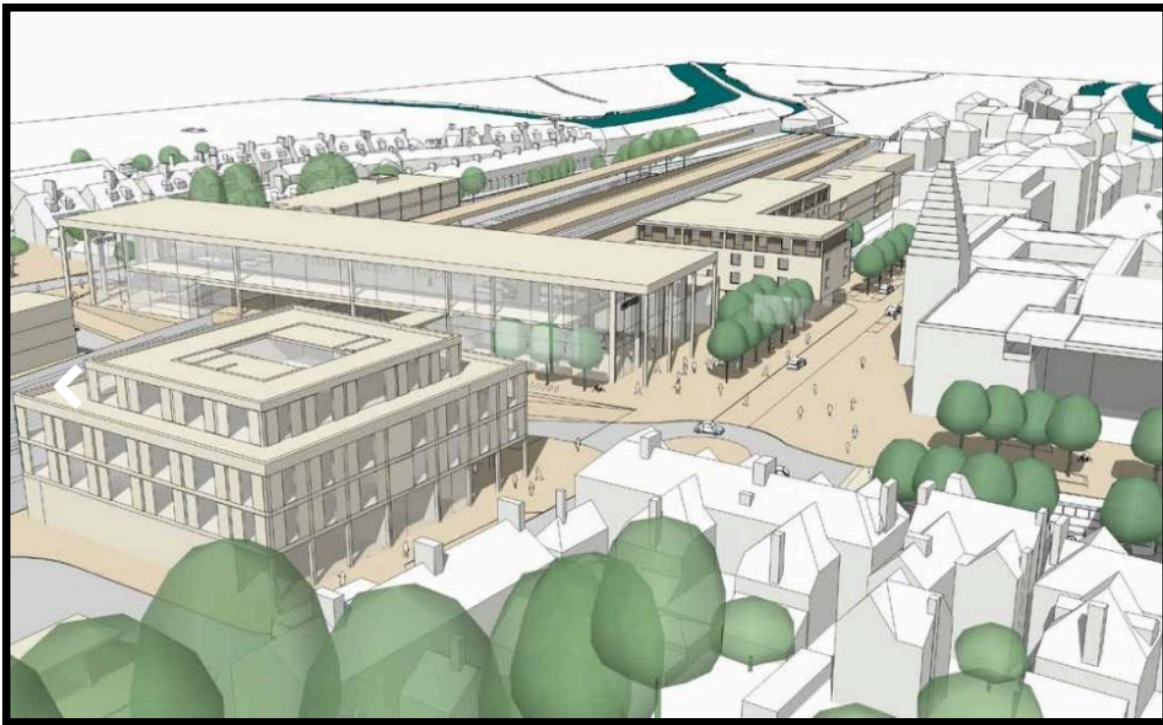
She has been in touch with city councillors to urge them to lobby for a permanent memorial to the martyr from the 13th century on the station site.

She said: "It is actually unthinkable that Oxford, which has become something of a city of martyrs, has no acknowledgement of an even more precedent-setting martyrdom that took place close to the new incoming London rail platform of the new station.

"With the construction of the new station it would seem appropriate to erect some kind of memorial near the site on the platform, or in the main Oxford rail station itself."

Plans for the overhaul of the 1970s station feature a bus interchange, multi-storey car park, housing, offices and a hotel.

The proposals, put forward by the city council and Network **Rail**, include a new building fronted by a public square inspired by King's Cross Station in London, with new track and another platform built.



This will be flanked by shops, offices and a hotel, while a 480-space car park and bus interchange for up to 18 buses will be built at Becket Street.

A consultation on the proposals is due to finish on August 25 and Ms Manix, an expert on Oxford's Jewish quarter, said the revamp should include the memorial to mark the little-known martyrdom in Oxford in 1222.

She said three centuries before the famous Oxford Protestant Martyrs were tried for heresy and burned at the stake by Bloody Mary Tudor, the first ever use in the British Isles of burning-at-the-stake as a punishment for heresy had also taken place in Oxford.

Ms Manix, from Chipping Norton, said the victim was an unnamed **Oxford University** student, who had converted from Christianity to Judaism and married a local Jewess.

He was tried for renouncing his religion by a church court at Osney Abbey, but before he

was transferred to **Oxford Castle** for a civil trial, the sheriff of the time decided to burn him at the stake right there, outside Osney Abbey gate.

City council leader Bob Price said Ms Manix's proposal, which she said has the support of Oxford University and Oxford Preservation Trust, could be worked into station designs.

He added it was 'early days' but there was no reason why Ms Manix's proposal could not be worked into the new station design.

City councillor Alex Hollingsworth, board member for planning, said: "It is important to reflect on all aspects of Oxford's history and Ms Manix has highlighted a little-known part of it.

"I'm sure a plaque could be accommodated but it would not form part of the planning guidance."