

# EXETER & TEIGN VALLEY RAILWAY

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Dartmoor National Park Authority,  
Parke,  
Bovey Tracey,  
Newton Abbot  
TQ13 9JQ

**COPY**

Dear Sirs,

## Objection to Proposed Residential Development at Moretonhampstead Station

The general permanence of buildings and development, and their effect upon people and the environment, means that planning officers should rightly look far ahead. They should think in terms of centuries when the layman thinks only of tomorrow.

Railways, because of the longevity of their works and equipment, are only attractive to long term thinkers. Which is why government, tending to think, like accountants, only in terms of the write-off period of a motor-car, finds it impossible to cope with the case for railways and the sustainable public transport needed for the future.

At Moretonhampstead, the short term - and sadly, popular - view is that the station would make an ideal alternative to the Betton Way site for a housing development, with the advantage of getting rid of a road haulage outfit's traffic. There is a surplus of employment land and so the planning authority's determination to reserve the station site cannot be understood.

Oil - cheap oil - has created this never-never land where the muddled thinking has it that lorries are bad and cars are good; that Moretonhampstead people can always go to work in Exeter or Newton; and that the town will of course not see a train service ever again.

The day will come when the authority will be able to quote from substantial planning guidance on the need to protect former railway infrastructure. Until then, planners must make use of what is available to them, and, in the case of Moretonhampstead, the emphasis on retention of employment land has the effect of protecting the station site, since business and commerce can be easily accommodated or removed when there is railway reconstruction.

If Thompson's want to go, they should go. The station cost them little enough in the first place; it owes them nothing now. The firm surely cannot apply any pressure by stating that its depot must be granted planning permission for

residential redevelopment in order to finance a relocation. Desirable though getting rid of the outsize traffic is, it would be wrong of the authority to be swayed; the principle must not be established that nuisance leads to gain. Thompson's will go anyway in the long run, together with all the other asinine systems cheap oil has made possible. The world they leave behind will be the worse in any case for their occupation; they need not scorch the earth behind them.

The authority must stand firm and not bend to uninformed public opinion or self-serving developers. Moretonhampstead Station is not the place for homes. It may not be the best place for trade and industry at the moment but cheap energy and excessive mobility have corrupted the situation and made a quite unnatural structure. The current designation at least will keep the site open and intact. Compromise now will hinder this railway's progress in years to come - in more than a decade but less than a century, it is hoped.

Yours faithfully,

**COPY**

C. Burges  
Owner and Operator

Encl. Copies of previous submissions under references  
0743/00 & 0400/01.