

From: Tom Williamson
Sent: 23 January 2020 09:41
To: Tim Holt-Wilson
Subject: Re: 'The Lawn' Diss

Dear Mr Holt-Wilson,

I am writing in support of your attempts to get the 'Parish Field' at Diss registered as a designed landscape of special historic significance. I won't repeat the historical information set out in the Norfolk Gardens Trust report, except to emphasise that the appearance of the perimeter belt on Bryant's 1826 map makes it clear that the landscape must have been established by then, and presumably some time during the previous three decades. I would also note that the retention of earlier field boundaries within the belt suggest that the intention was to create a kind of arcadian *ferme ornee* rather than just a diminutive version of a Capability Brown style park. Either way, this is a precious and rare survivor.

Small, detached parks, while never common, were a significant feature of the Georgian and Regency periods, usually associated with 'villas' and other small properties owned by members of the wealthy middle classes (rather than by established landowners, with more extensive properties and a greater ability to divert roads, etc). I believe that only one other example survives in Norfolk - at Letheringsett in the north of the county, associated with the Cozens Hardy brewing family. This, however, is in a rural rather than urban context. No other urban example remains in the county, and few elsewhere.

The landscape is thus of more than local importance in historical terms. It also, I should add, contributes significantly to the distinctive character of the town of Diss, as well as delivering important biodiversity benefits. It deserves appropriate recognition, and the protection from development which this might afford.

Very best wishes,

Tom Williamson
(Professor of Landscape History, University of East Anglia, Norwich)