



The city island Kraanbolwerk (centre of the photo). Apartment complex 'De Stelling' (top right) was completed first; 'de Koningin' ('the Queen'), the two tall buildings with the light-coloured brickwork on Friesewal, last. © Erik Karst Fotografie

## With Kraanbolwerk, Zwolle has gained a trendy new neighbourhood near the city centre: 'I want to stay here for the rest of my life'

**In the course of eight years, construction cranes have transformed the outdated industrial area Kraanbolwerk into a new neighbourhood full of trendy canal-side houses, apartments offering splendid views, and charming little courtyards. Residents say they never want to leave.**

Ingrid Stijkel 02-07-22, 17:00

"Welcome", says Jannemiek Trooster with a big smile as she swings open the front door of her apartment. We ask if we can take a look inside, and just one glance into her living room speaks volumes about her enthusiasm. She may well have the most beautiful view in the city. The windows offer a fantastic view of the Peperbus steeple, the Maagjesbolwerk building, and the red-tiled roofs of the inner city. "And look here. This is so lovely", Jannemiek (65) points out as she walks to the left side of her spacious apartment. "I can look down the entire Thorbeckegracht canal. I never get bored of it."

Trooster is one of the very first residents of Kraanbolwerk, the high-density urban housing project in the heart of the city, with many apartment complexes, lofts with large windows, narrow alleyways, and new public squares. She was willing to make a sacrifice and live outside the city for five years, to bridge the time between the sale of her previous house and the completion of this apartment. "Because I knew that this would be turned into an amazing place."



Resident Jannemiek Trooster enjoys her view of the inner city of Zwolle every day: "I never get bored of it." © Frans Paalman

She was just one of the few who persevered. At the start of construction of the first complex on the city island, a former bastion, only thirty percent of the apartments had been sold, despite all the initial interest. There was a three-year delay between the date of purchase and the date of completion, and that deterred a lot of people who had been interested. The soil remediation and the construction of the underground car park took a lot of time. The entire car park is below ground level, which means that you won't find any cars parked in the streets.

Last Friday, area developer VanWonen celebrated the official handover on one of the new quays on the waterfront. Architects, stakeholders from the municipality, and residents joined the party. "We had to postpone the party because of Covid-19, but it was certainly worthwhile it, to reflect on the long start-up period", says VanWonen project manager Frida Hoekman during a short tour around Kraanbolwerk.

Even though only thirty percent of the homes had been sold, BAM decided to start the construction. Hoekman drops a hint that it was a bold move, as the norm is to have sold about 70 percent before ordering the construction cranes. "Although it also had to do with agreements with the municipality and subsidies relating to the project", she adds. At a later stage, her employer took over the project from BAM and Nijhuis Bouw signed the contract for the construction.

## Resistance

The redevelopment of this former industrial area in Zwolle was not without its challenges. As early as 2004, the first negotiations were held with paint manufacturer Schaeapman Lakfabrieken, which was located at the tip of the island, Hoekman explains as she walks along the Friesewal quay. "There were high soil remediation costs, which meant that a high density of housing was required to keep the development feasible." It led to resistance. "Community involvement resulted in fewer houses and a deficit in the land exploitation." Through a special arrangement, a subsidy was provided to help with the redevelopment. "In 2014, demolition could finally begin and the site remediation was started."



Frida Hoekman, VanWonen project developer, at courtyard 'Hof van Volharding': "The industrial history has been integrated into the architecture." © Frans Paalman

Resident Jannemiek Trooster is not too sure about the compact development. She shows us the view from her bedroom. "At first I didn't need to hang curtains, but after an apartment was built next door, my privacy was somewhat gone. Oh well, together with the heat from the sun it's only one of the few drawbacks", she says.

Ilse van Hal (48) is putting plants in pots in front of her single-family house on Thorbeckewal. She lives there with her husband and 18-year-old daughter. "We really like it here. We're in the inner city, and yet it's quiet. Now and then there is some noise from the pub across the street", she points to café de Tagrijn. "But it's all part of the game and we hang out there ourselves sometimes", she laughs. "Everything the city offers is right at our doorstep; the market, the theatre. I really love that."



Ilse van Hal has made a cosy place to sit, with cushions and plants, in front of her front door: “We get a lot of people dropping by.”  
© Frans Paalman

She may have sacrificed a bit when it comes to green space, but that is compensated by her vegetable garden in another part of the city, which she has had for many years now. “The great thing is that we get a lot of visitors here. My daughter's friends often drop by.” The new residents have plenty of contact with each other. They are from everywhere: from Zwolle, Hattem, the Randstad. They often meet up for events, such as on Neighbourhood Day in the courtyard ‘Hof van Volharding’ (‘Courtyard of Perseverance’).

### Past

The courtyard was named after the Volharding factory that once stood there. The antique façade was completely reconstructed; at the back of the new builds, the industrial elements are still visible. Project developer Frida Hoekman considers this a good example of the atmosphere that was planned for the entire area: new builds with a high degree of diversity and a nod to the industrial past.

Once the De Stelling complex had been completed, the development of the former bastion proceeded quite fast, not least because the housing market picked up. As a result, a total of 127 homes were added to the housing market, says project developer Hoekman. “The smallest is a studio of 37 square metres, and the largest is a canal-side house of 224 square metres.” Except for 10 rental homes, all houses are owner-occupied. The cheapest sold for 135,000 euros and the most expensive for 950,000 euros on completion, but without a kitchen and with standard finishes.

### Sold

Residents Trooster and Van Hal only heard positive things about the new island that was added to the inner city. The project developer understands why. “The architecture is so rich. Look at the workmanship, the façades make little jumps, the brickwork is slightly different, you have different types of houses that still fit together.” And those narrow alleys, does that appeal to everyone? “People who want to have a lot of space around their home are not going to live here.”

The fact that only three houses have been resold since the first handovers says it all, in her opinion. With a considerable increase in value? The developer knows that a canal-side house sold for around 800.000, while the first owners had bought it for 350.000 euros. “But at that time the house did not have a kitchen, nor all the customization that was added later. So you can't really say that the price almost doubled”, she adds.

Trooster and Van Hal do not even think about selling. “I want to stay here, probably for the rest of my life,” says Trooster. Van Hal: “We have found our niche here.”



Jannemiek Trooster's view of Thorbeckegracht, with on the left some of the new housing development. © Frans Paalman