

APPENDIX A

Regrowth

soft story atlas

Roos te Velde | Metropolitan Ecologies of Places Graduation Report | appendix

colofon

Master Thesis - P5 Report - appendix 'soft story atlas'
MSc Architecture, Urbanism and Building Sciences - Track Urbanism
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Regrowth. Imagining renewed values for space

Graduation Studio: Metropolitan Ecology of Places

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This is the 'soft story atlas', an appendix to my Mastertrack Urbanism of the Delft University of Technology graduation project. It consists of several drawings and stories which together form Soft Stories.

This method is based on the micro-stories by Paola Viganò and Bernardo Secchi (2009), combined with the soft atlas by Jan Rothuizen (2023). Viganò and Secchi used micro-stories as a new method in urbanism, illustrating the visions and scenarios they had for Antwerp by showing one family or housing situation. Rothuizen also developed a new method of storytelling, weaving together visual illustrations with great attention to detail and a personal perspective to explore the different layers of urban environments. Rothuizen lent the word 'soft' from the writer Raban, who wrote the book "Soft City" in 1974, in which he also plays with the balance between the built environment and the subjective experience of people in it (Rothuizen, 2023).

In my graduation project, soft story building illustrates a household's living situation and related values. Long and short conversations with people are combined into reality-based personas, and their living environment is illustrated in drawings.

Come along to the Zwolle region!

Urbanism

TU Delft
BK Bouwkunde



Meike and Sem



Johanna and Cor



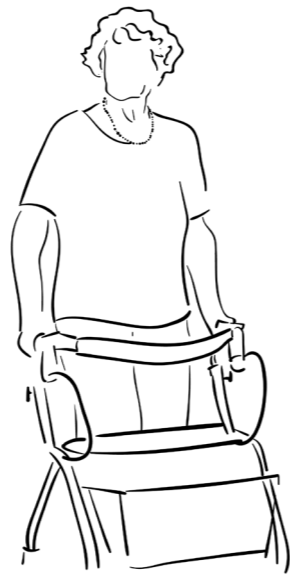
Pieter



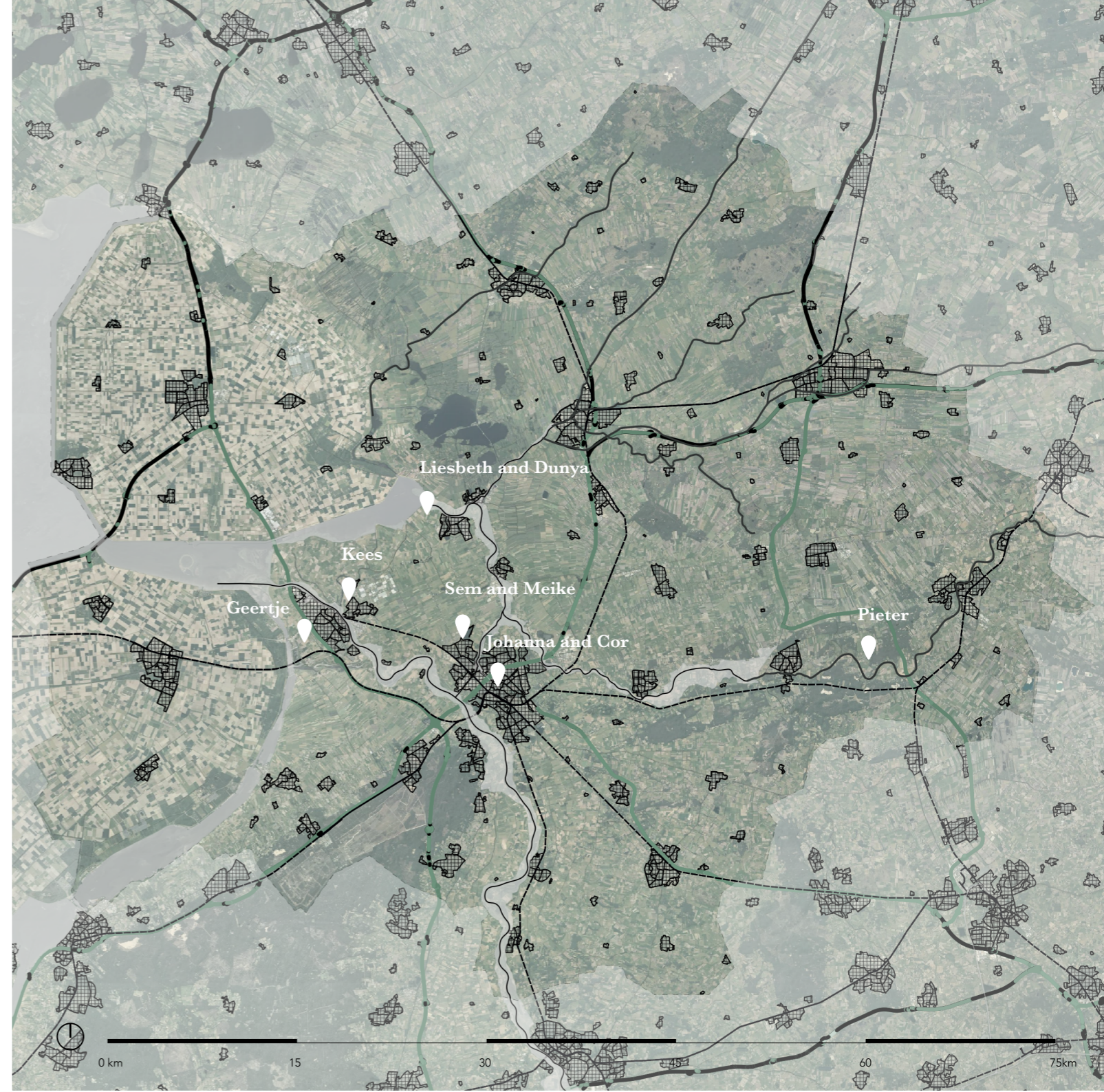
Kees



Liesbeth and Dunya



Geertje





Sem and Meike

"At one point we were negotiating with our own real estate agent. He declared us crazy that we wanted to overbid that much. In the end, we didn't get the house because someone overbided us..." Amid the hustle and bustle of the moving, Sem tells the story of the search of their new house in Stadshagen, Zwolle. He and his girlfriend are both 29 and wanted to leave Gouda, where they were renting an apartment. "We both felt that the time was there to... you know, settle down," Sem says with a suggestive smile. They chose Zwolle for its location: close to Utrecht, where Sem works, and close to family in Overijssel. "But mainly for the mentality. The harsh 'everyone on it's own' of the Randstad, you don't have that here. Zwolle is still very village-like. Three neighbours already offered to lend us a drill."

Climate risks did not play a role in the choice of house or location, Sem says. But when they got this house that was built in 2000, it did give them a safe feeling. "There were things that needed to be done, like the bathroom and some maintenance, but with a newish house like this, you just know that the base is okay. No concrete rot, no asbestos, no cracks in the walls, you know! We have seen different things in other houses we saw, in the centre of Zwolle for example."

Their house stands right on the edge of the clay formed by the IJssel River and the low peat of the Mastenbroekpolder. According to the Knowledge Centre Tackling Foundation Problems (KCAF), their street is indeed safe. The Centre combines the soil type with the year of construction and the type of foundation, showing the vulnerability of areas. The flood risk map shows some bigger concerns. Thomas says he did the test on Overstroomik.nl (Do I flood .nl), after he saw a link in the news. "It said we could flood up to 3 metres! But it probably won't get that far. I saw that they were reinforcing the dike just last week."



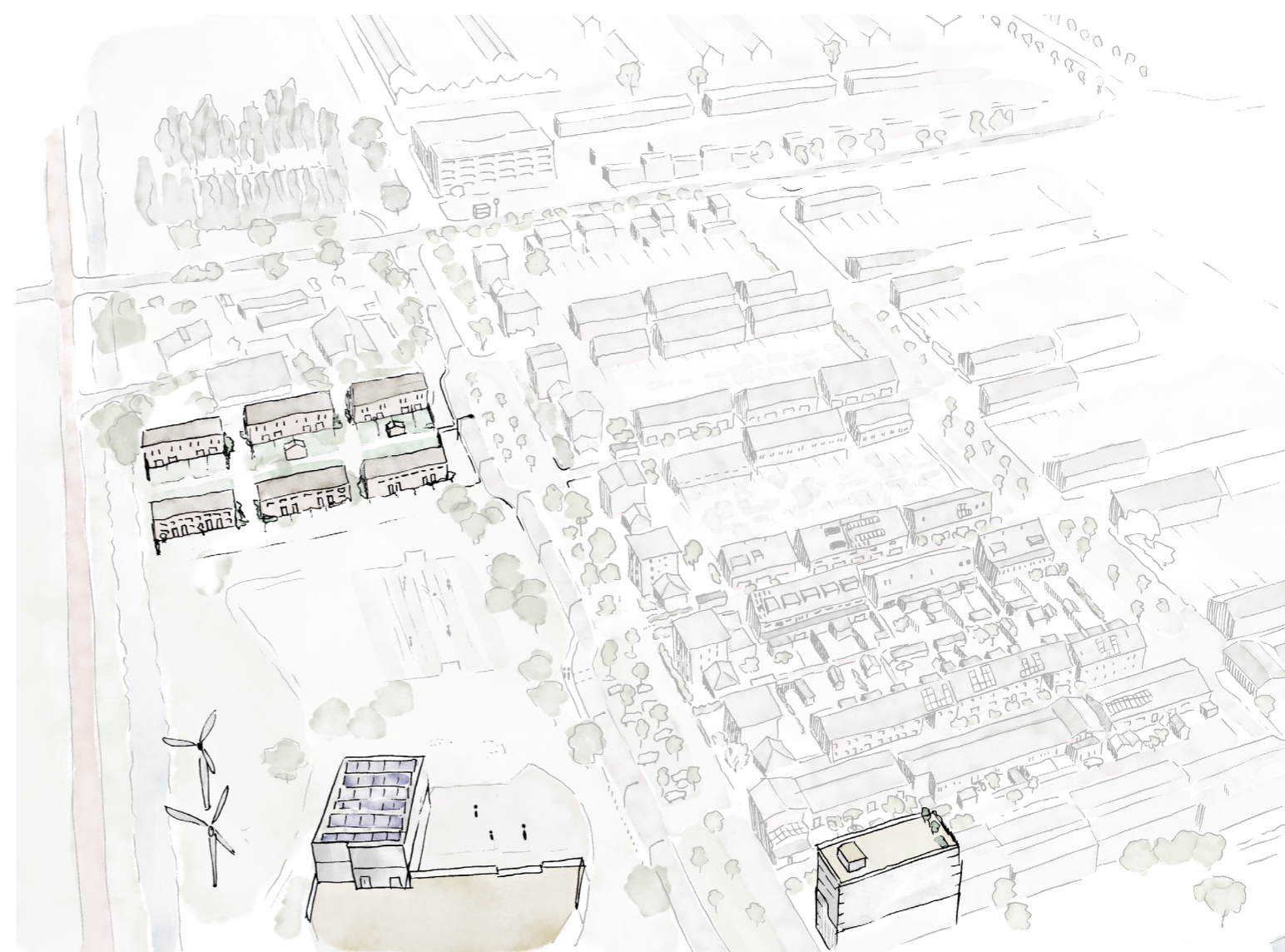
Circular growth | In Stadshagen, the local school prioritises ecological education, instilling green values in children. The school gardens flourish with vegetables, and kids bring their enthusiasm home, inspiring parents. The area is densified with timber buildings. Each street has a sharing shed stocked with tools and a communal car, reducing individual ownership. Eco-friendly

gutters line the roads, efficiently managing rainwater. "These were very logical steps for us. When the kids went to school, we got even more connected with the neighbourhood."



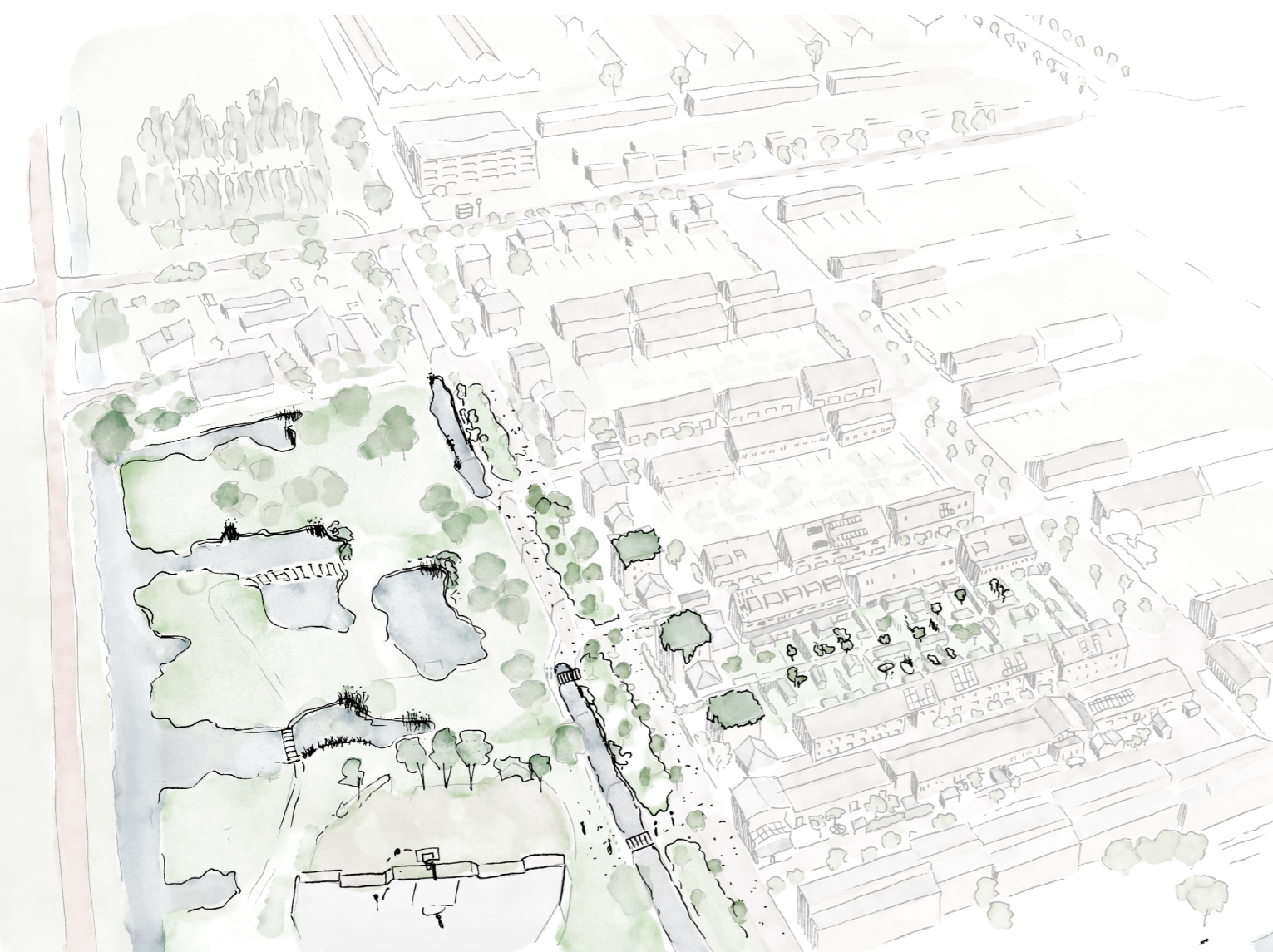
Innovative growth | Densification within Stadshagen was crucial to preserving larger ecosystems in the region, leading to the sacrifice of smaller green spaces. The local school expands, accommodating more students as the population grows. Innovative urban planning focuses on compact living to minimise environmental impact. New buildings incorporate the latest green

technologies, ensuring energy efficiency. The community embraces smart living, balancing the needs of urban growth with ecological preservation. By focusing on densification, Stadshagen sets an example of how modern cities can evolve sustainably, integrating innovation and environmental responsibility in everyday life.



Ecological growth | The municipality prioritised nature, mandating the depaving of gardens to create more green spaces. The community repurposes empty plots and the school square for ecological projects. "At first, we thought it was a bit of a hassle, depaving the whole garden, but now we see that it actually helps when it rains a lot." Residents embrace smart landscaping,

transforming their surroundings into vibrant ecosystems.



Societal growth | In Stadshagen, cohousing has become the norm, with groups merging houses to create communal living spaces. The municipality supports this by providing soil to housing co-ops, encouraging sustainable building practices. These cohousing projects foster strong community bonds, with shared responsibilities and resources. Neighbours collaborate on maintaining

common areas and supporting each other. The communal lifestyle reduces individual footprints and strengthens social ties. Blabla





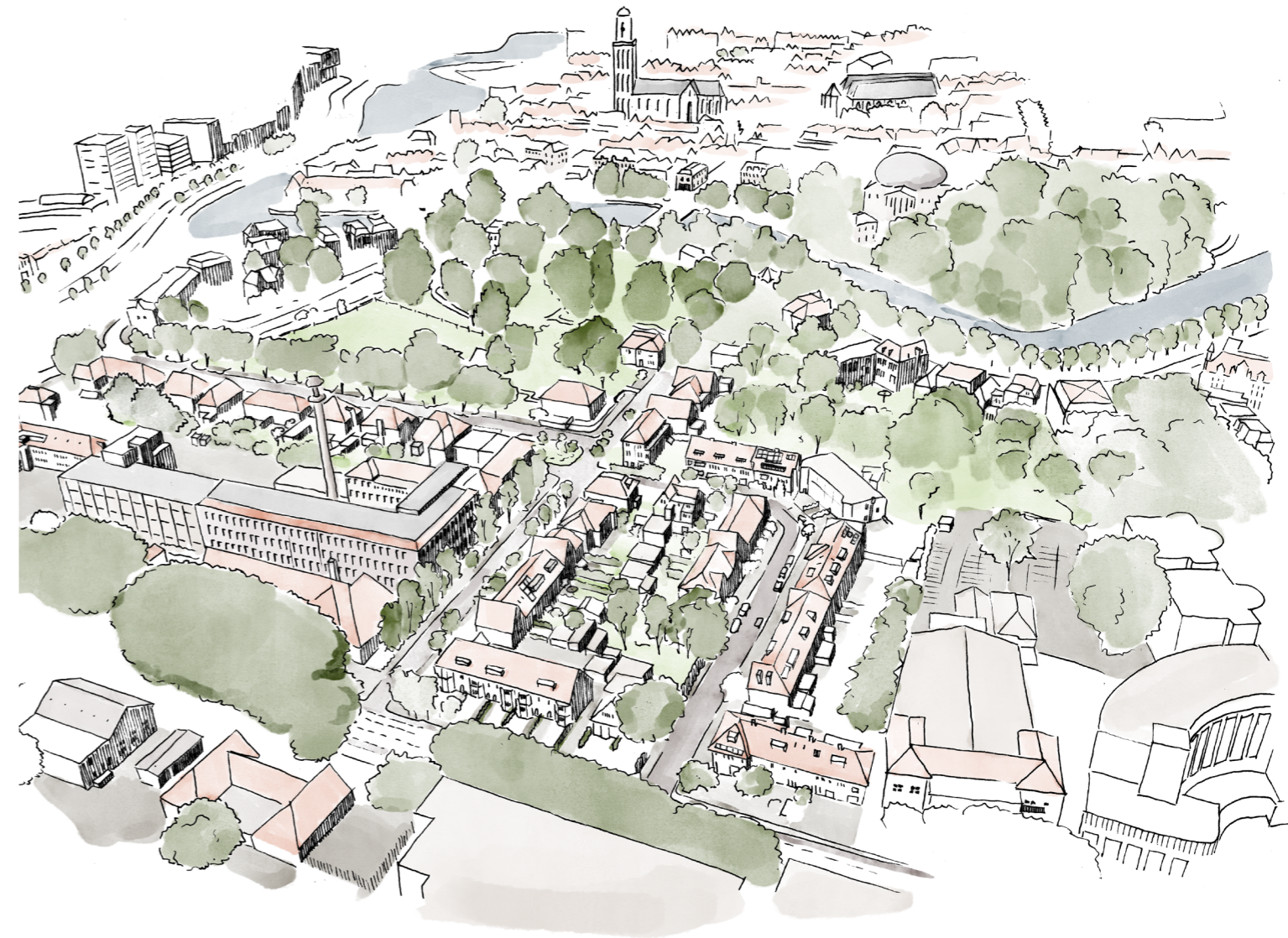
Johanna and Cor

Walking the dog in the English woods, taking a bike ride along the Vecht, or going for a run along the Zwarte Water. For a day of shopping, they don't have to go far, as Zwolle has the nicest city centre in the Netherlands, but if they want something different, they usually go to Deventer or Utrecht. The children have left home a few years now, so they live far too big. "It's true, we are the classic empty nesters. But boy, it is nice living here!"

In 25 years, Johanna and Cor have come to love Zwolle very much. They lived very nicely in Stadshagen for more than a decade, with all the other families. In 2009, the four kids got bigger, and all wanted their own rooms. They managed to sell their house with some profit and bought a beautiful, refurbished house in old Assendorp,

close to the city centre. Johanna is a doctor in Zwolle and Cor works in logistics. "It was a blessing to have the children grow up here. Everything is within cycling distance: the school, and the hockey club. Even when they went out in the evening, we knew they never had to go home for long along scary roads."

A little guiltily, Johanna explains that they indeed live way too big. "But it is like that in the whole neighbourhood. We know all our neighbours; some have lived here for 30 years." The houses are super nice old buildings with real wooden floors. Worried about the future? Not so much. They see the popularity of the city growing. There is a lot of additional construction, Stadshagen is being expanded and in the city centre, for example, old warehouses are being converted. "I hope to continue living here for as long as possible. I know there are old people's homes, but of course, because of the government cuts, they have all been cut back too, so I don't want to move into those either if it's not necessary yet."

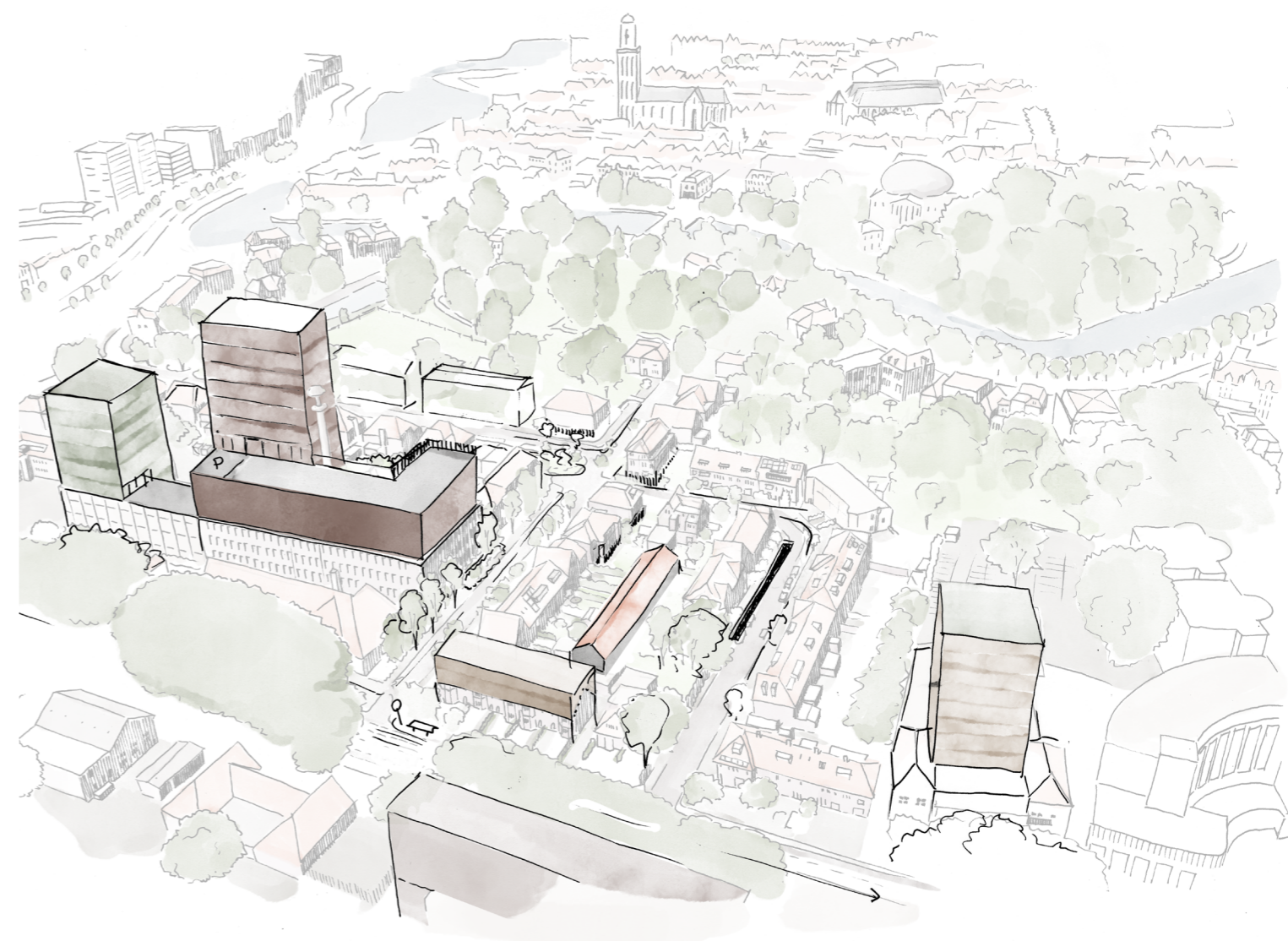


Circular growth | The neighbourhood group chat turned into an online sharing platform. Through the garden of Johanna and Cor, around 20 families can enter the sheds which house all the tools they share. When something is broken, the person responsible for that tool brings it to the reuse hub, which is convenient across the street. Renovations and top-ups of buildings are now,

30 years later, standard constructed with wood from the Veluwe. "Luckily, the group chat is also still there. We discuss when the crops of the urban garden are ready and when we will collect them. The platform is for more official announcements, like where we can pick up the vegetables or what is on the market this Saturday."

Innovative growth | "Halfway the 20s, the government really took action. The national foundation reconstruction act came, which renovated all damaged foundations and at the same time made all housing flood proof until 1 metre. Rules for renovation relaxed anyway, making topping up with towers very popular." The Randstad expanded towards the east because

of smart mobility innovations, making the Zwolle station area a very modern metropolitan area. "From here to Amsterdam in less than an hour!" This also ensured that building in extremely flood-prone areas was not needed anymore. People got used again to living with the water.



Ecological growth | Due to more and more natural disasters and an impending pandemic, people were increasingly yearning for nature. As a result, nature-based solutions were increasingly preferred for construction plans, even if they cost more money or took longer. The NK tile-swapping got out of hand when Westerstraat of Johanna and Cor had their entire pavement de-paved. Now it is

normal to have gravel or sand as a street instead of asphalt. When Johanna and Cor wanted to renovate their now hundred-year-old roof, it was not possible because squirrels and bats had built their nests there. 'That was galling at first, but we got compensation from the municipality for it. And now we basically just have new housemates!'



Societal growth | "During the housing crisis at the beginning of the 20s, we took in a couple as subletters. We liked it so much when Cor suddenly fell ill and they ran errands for us from time to time, that we rebuilt the house and now there are four of us living here. We are on the ground floor because I can hardly climb the stairs anymore, haha!" As a result of the crisis, many cities relaxed their rules

on cohabitation, land, and property ownership. This led to a significant increase in housing co-ops, offering a solution to the housing shortage within cities.





Pieter

Not far from the busy Zwolle, we find Pieter, a dairy farmer in the Vecht valley. 'De ene keer geet 't gladjes, de ander keer geet 't stroef,' he says in the dialect, loosely translated to 'sometimes everything goes smoothly, sometimes everything goes rigidly'. Dutch farmers are known for being stiff and not very advertising about their problems. 'Yeah, what can I say?'

For centuries, Pieter's family has been farmers. 'But it used to be different, ey. Back then, you had a cow, a goat, and some land. My grandfather was born here across the street. They had just canalised the Vecht and his parents built their new farm here in 1913. He helped soldiers from England land here on this field,' Pieter points at the meadow next to his farm. After the war, my dad was born, and he built up the business when he

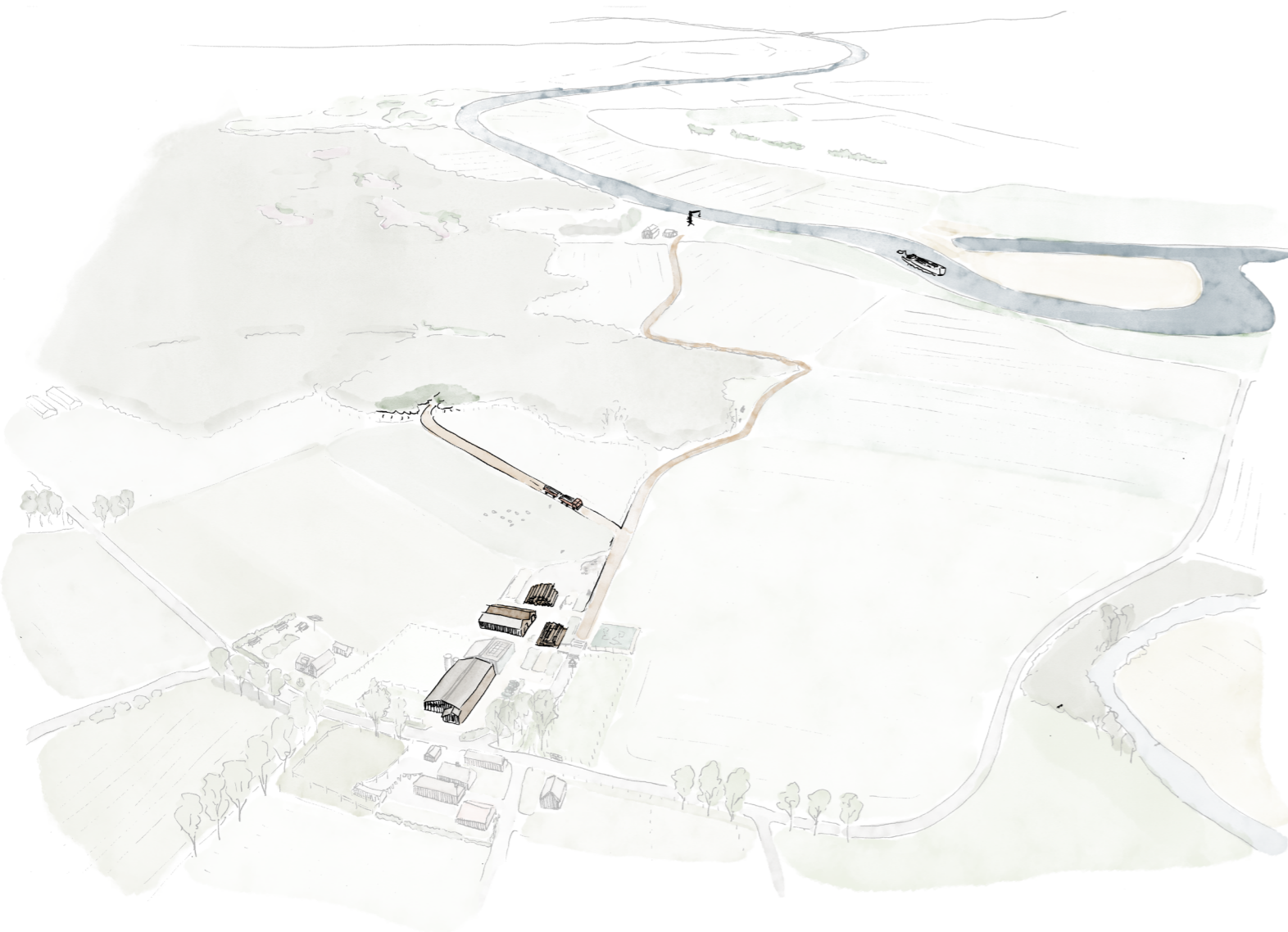
was older. Now we have more than 200 cows,' he says proudly. 'They graze in the fields here, and we sell the milk to the Albert Heijn.'

Pieter also was at the Malieveld during the farmer's protests in 2023. 'I was so frustrated. It felt good to let our voices be heard because they do not ever listen. If those nitrogen rules would go into effect, it would simply mean no milk at the Albert Heijn!' Pieter sighs. 'I just don't get how we get forced to do all these things, change our lives completely, sell our family heritage business, but all these people buying our harvest and products in the supermarket don't.'



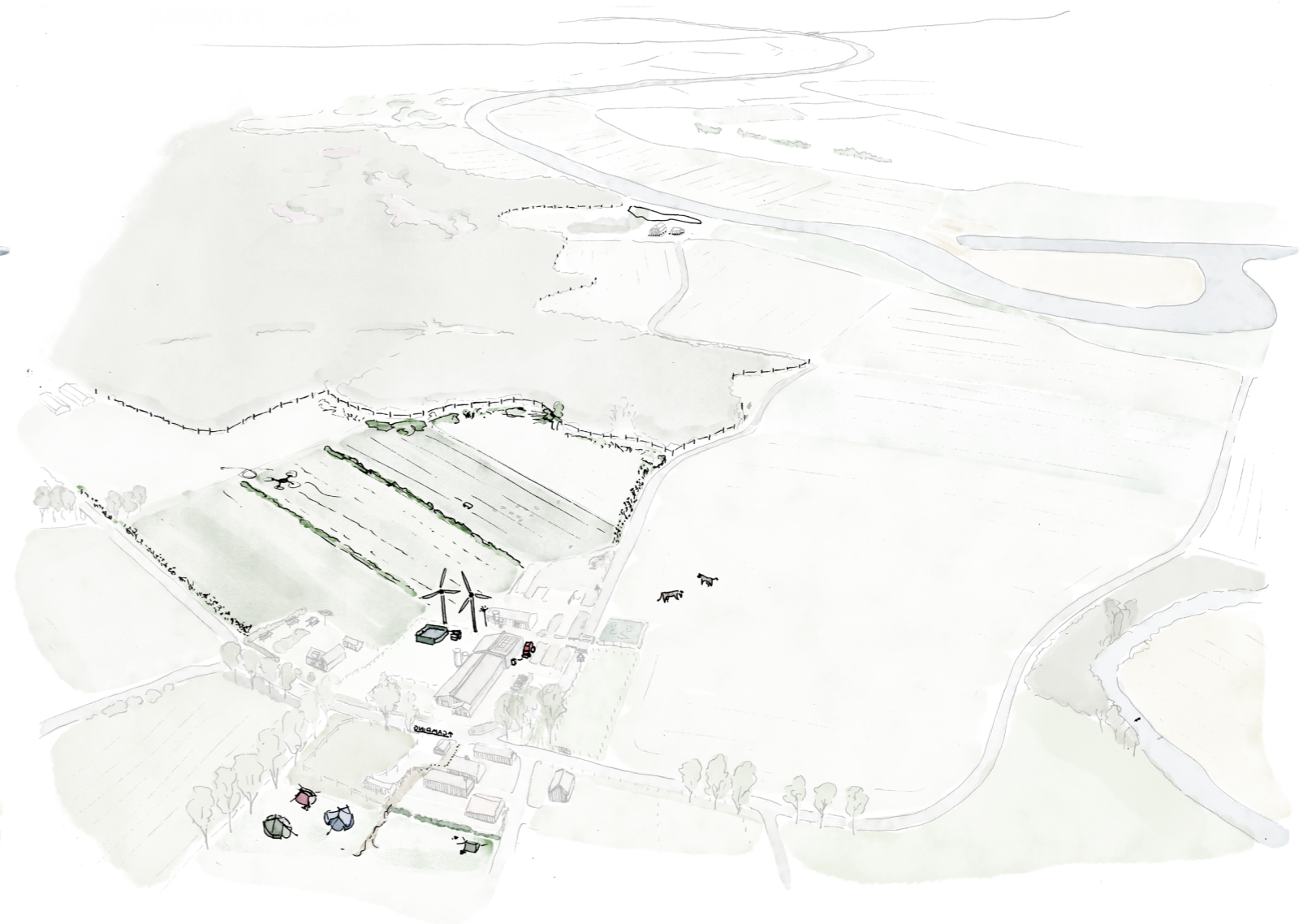
Circular growth | The forest is thriving as a timber nursery. Nearby, Pieter's timber shop is busy, selling wood and hosting workshops on natural furniture making. The Vecht river connects the area, helping transport logs to Hardenberg and Zwolle. The road to Ommen's industrial area is essential for moving crafted timber, but also for

revitalises the Vecht Valley, promoting ecological harmony and resourcefulness, where everything is connected and nothing is wasted.



Innovative growth | Pieter gazes at the sky, watching a drone buzz over his fields. This is the farm of the future, where technology and tradition blend seamlessly. The drone monitors crops, ensuring precision farming. Pieter generates his own energy with windmills like basically every farmer these days. The cosy bed & breakfast

rustic camping site. Visitors experience farm life firsthand and can book trips into the forest. The forest is no longer freely accessible to humans to allow the ecosystem to function as well as possible.



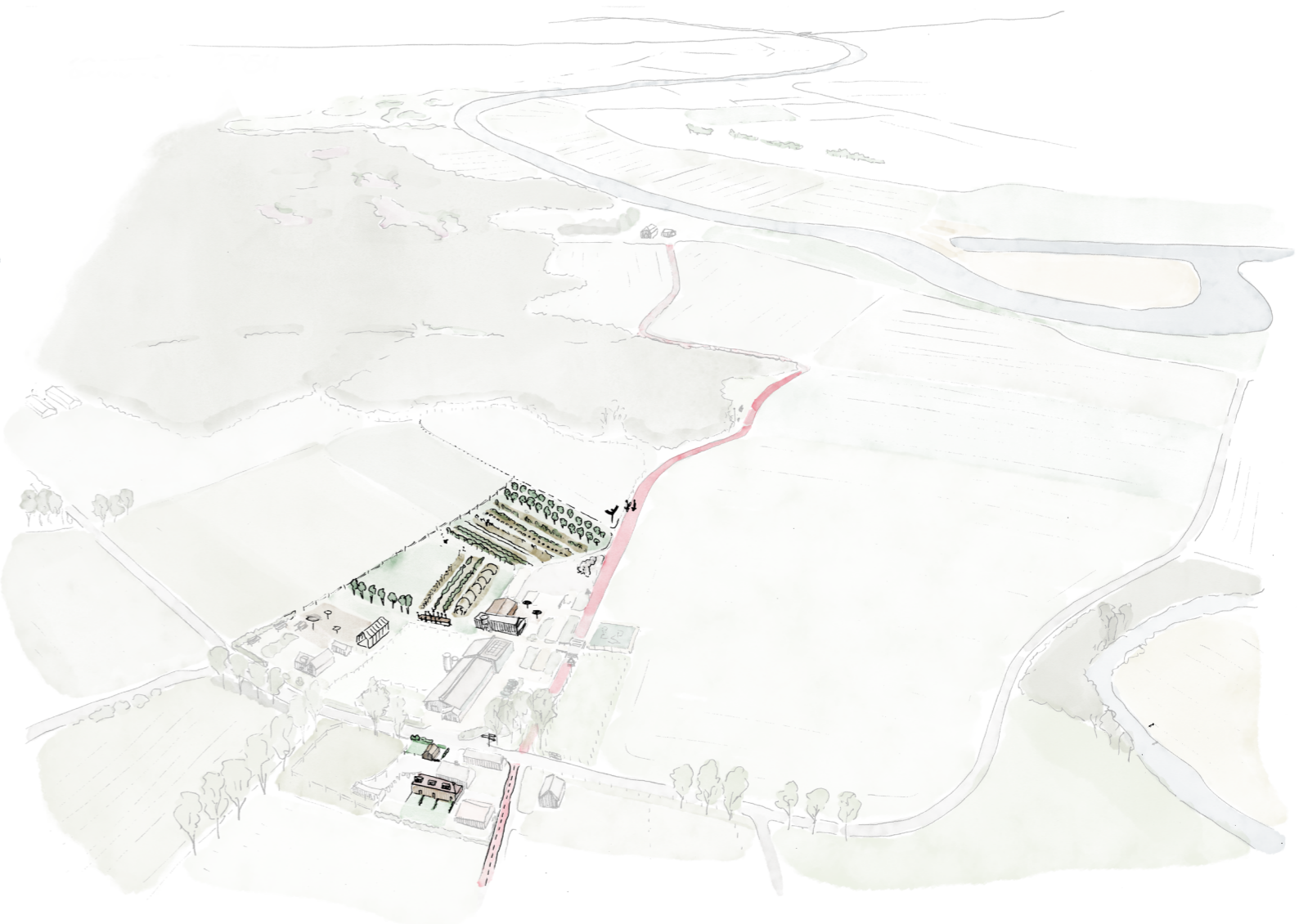
Ecological growth | After a huge flood in 2027, when the cows had to stand inside for weeks, Pieter decided to use his grass fields for something else. Natural crop protection such as with strip cultivation and celebrating ecosystems became his priority. 'Actually, a bit more like my grandpa used to do.' Along the Vecht, forests connect, creating

breathe again, reclaiming their role in nurturing the land. The Vecht's waters nourish the fields, while trees stand guard against erosion.



Societal growth | After his son's insistence, Pieter's farm joins the Lenteland farms, a community-supported agriculture concept. People from Ommen cycle along the new bike path to buy fresh produce and connect with the land. The farm is alive with activity, a meeting place for neighbours and friends. "It gives me security

my products!" The neighbours next to the farm renovated one of their barns into small apartments. They also help at the farm and sometimes do the 'breakfast' part of the B&B when the others are not there.





Kees

“They say they are talking to us and trying to find solutions, but I haven’t heard from them since before summer!” Kees (59) lives at the edge of IJsselmuiden and has a view over the Koekoek polder. Last year, the municipality presented plans for a new neighbourhood of 300 houses right next to his backyard. “That I don’t have a problem with, it’s good that they are finally building something. But they are planning a 3-metre high noise barrier at the edge of my garden, which means that I’ll never have sun in my garden again.

The house he bought 36 years ago lies in between the old bakery the new neighbourhood is named after (De Bakkerij) and a transport company. Across from his neat garden will be elderly homes. To meet noise requirements for the new housing, a noise barrier is needed. “I’m so angry. Especially because I have tried to come up with solutions. I offered to sell a piece of my garden to the municipality so they can build the wall at a spot that doesn’t block ALL my sunlight. “We will work on it,” they said. I haven’t heard from them since.”

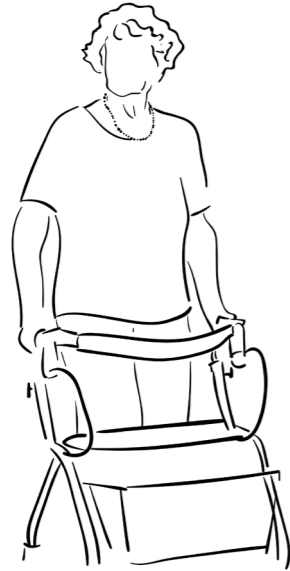
This is what is the problem. They are finally making some plans for houses, that’s good considering the housing crisis and all. But they don’t think! And especially, they don’t listen. Now the elderman is saying that the ‘neighbourhood’ is causing the delay in the planning of the housing, but if he would have just listened, there would have been no delay.



Liesbeth and Dunya

“Liesbeth, could you move? I want a picture of the tower without you on it, haha!” Laughing, Sonja tries to get a picture of the huge clock tower next to the Kampen city hall without her best friend on it, which is a challenge in itself, at 65 metres. It is a little bit before lunchtime and the two friends just arrived in the city centre of Kampen. They are doing leg 14 of the Zuiderzee hike today, a hike around the whole old coastline of the Zuiderzee. “We do one every week on Tuesday. We drive to the end point of the hike and take public transport to the beginning. Sometimes we cheat a little. We mostly do it for the coffee and lunch in all the villages afterwards, haha!” Sonja agrees. “After the Afsluitdijk, that was especially needed. Gut, that was boring.”

Liesbeth explains that the hike is a beautiful way to experience the Dutch landscape. “It made me think about how special it is that we built an enormous dike in this huge lake. Such a long time ago!



Geertje

In the heart of the Flevowijk in Kampen, lives Geertje, an 81-year-old woman. Her quaint home, a relic from the sixties, stands as a testament to the passage of time in this aging neighborhood. The Flevowijk, once an expansive outlying area of Kampen, now finds itself more centrally located, thanks to the emergence of the new Reeve-delta river. Geertje, a widow living alone, reflects on the changes she has witnessed over the decades. Her home, though a symbol of the past, is a reminder of the challenges faced by the community. The housing stock, although nostalgic, lacks modern comforts and energy efficiency, contributing to the prevalence of grey spaces that grapple with heat stress and water nuisances.

The community of Flevowijk is a place where both pride and concern are evident in the fabric

of society. Many of the residents feel a strong attachment to the vast green areas and open spaces. However, the outdated living conditions have negatively impacted the quality of life for the residents, resulting in a high rate of depression and loneliness.

As Geertje gazes out of her window, she contemplates the neighbourhood's struggles – a community ageing together with homes in dire need of repair. "Look, most of us have been living here for decades. The Flevowijk really is the social housing neighbourhood of the city. But that shouldn't mean we get left behind, right? And all those youngsters not being able to find a home... it must be terrible! I wish the government would do something!" Geertje acknowledges the need for improvement but remains proud of the space and green areas surrounding her. She envisions a future where the Flevowijk becomes a place that welcomes both young and old, fostering a sense of community and addressing the pressing issue of loneliness.

