

KONINGIN JULIANA STRAAT

A Street That Teaches You to Look

Concise edition – summary of the complete Dutch text

Jeroen and Claire



Foreword

Everyone in Emmeloord knows Koningin Julianastraat. Its tall façades, rich brickwork, black tiled roofs, chimneys and distinctive details make it one of the town's most recognisable streets. For Jeroen and Claire, it is also home. Long before they lived here, they already enjoyed driving through the street. Their love of old houses – homes in which earlier generations have visibly left their mark – makes this place especially remarkable in a polder where almost everything is still relatively young.

When they received the key to number 23, they became not only the residents of a listed house, but also part of a much larger story. That story begins with the Zuiderzee, continues through the reclamation of the land and the birth of Emmeloord, and leads to the architects and craftsmen who shaped the street and, for now, to the people who live here today. This book is therefore not intended as a dry history lesson. It is an invitation to slow down, look more carefully and discover how much thought, craftsmanship and history can be hidden in what at first seems to be an ordinary residential street.



1. When the Zuiderzee Still Covered This Land

To understand Koningin Julianastraat, you have to begin with the water. Less than a century ago, the ground on which the street now stands did not exist as habitable land. For centuries this was the Zuiderzee, a vast and unpredictable inland sea. Where houses now stand, children play and cars pass by, there was only water, sky and horizon. The sea brought trade and food, but also danger. Storm surges could cause enormous damage, and fishermen from places such as Urk and Schokland knew that returning home safely could never be taken for granted.

Emelwerd also belongs to this history: a medieval settlement on or near the place where Emmeloord would later arise. The advancing water eventually brought the settlement to an end, but its name survived. Centuries later, the new centre of the Noordoostpolder was named Emmeloord. It created a remarkable historical circle: a place that disappeared beneath the water gave its name to a town that could exist only because that water had been pushed back.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, confidence grew that the Netherlands could do more than simply defend itself against the water: it could also overcome it. Closing off the Zuiderzee and reclaiming parts of the seabed was an extraordinarily ambitious project. With the completion of the Afsluitdijk in 1932, the Zuiderzee became the IJsselmeer. Then, on 9 September 1942, the Noordoostpolder fell dry.



What emerged was initially an almost empty plain of wet marine clay. There were no trees, houses or roads. Yet that very emptiness offered a unique opportunity: an entire landscape could be created almost from the drawing board. First the soil had to be made usable. Ditches were dug, roads constructed and trees planted to break the wind. Farms and villages followed.

Anyone walking through Koningin Julianastraat today sees little to suggest that immense expanse of water. Yet the old seabed literally lies beneath every step. Beneath the paving stones, the foundations and the roots of the trees is the bed of the former Zuiderzee. The street is therefore built not only on land, but on an extraordinary history.

2. The Birth of Emmeloord

When the Noordoostpolder fell dry, it created not only new agricultural land but also the question of how an entirely new society should be organised. The planners did not have to expand existing villages; they could consider from the outset how people would live, work, shop, go to school and meet one another. After all, a polder needed more than fields. It also needed a heart.

That heart became Emmeloord. The town was deliberately placed in the centre of the Noordoostpolder. From it, the main roads radiated like the spokes of a wheel towards the ten surrounding villages: Bant, Creil, Ens, Espel, Kraggenburg, Luttelgeest, Marknesse, Nagele, Rutten and Tollebeek. This original planning principle can still be clearly recognised on a map today.

Emmeloord itself was also carefully designed. Broad avenues provided light and space, trees offered shelter from the polder wind and green spaces gave the young town a leafy character. Churches, shops, cafés, restaurants and other amenities were given logical places. The town had to function efficiently, while also becoming somewhere people could genuinely feel at home.

At first, an important landmark was missing. That changed in 1959 with the construction of the Poldertoren. At almost sixty-five metres high, the tower became Emmeloord's beacon. It can be seen from far across the polder, and for many residents the sight of the tower on the horizon brings a sense of coming home.



For Jeroen and Claire, the tower is part of everyday life. Their home is only a short distance away and every hour the carillon sounds across the town centre. The combination of a quiet monumental street and the liveliness of the centre makes this place special to them. Emmeloord feels urban without being metropolitan, lively without losing its human scale.

Within this carefully designed new Emmeloord, space was reserved for a residential street that was allowed to stand apart. Here architecture, solidity and beauty were intended to go hand in hand. That street would eventually become Koningin Julianastraat.

3. From Goudenregenstraat to Koningin Julianastraat

The name Koningin Julianastraat now seems self-evident, but the earliest plans showed a different name: Goudenregenstraat. That fitted the early naming scheme in Emmeloord, where many streets were named after trees, shrubs and plants. The new land was meant not only to be functional, but also green and welcoming.

History changed the plan. On 6 September 1948, Queen Wilhelmina abdicated and Juliana succeeded her. The Netherlands was still deeply engaged in reconstruction after the Second World War. New houses, schools and businesses symbolised a society rebuilding its confidence in the future. The young Noordoostpolder also wanted to mark the change of monarch, and the planned Goudenregenstraat was therefore renamed Koningin Julianastraat.

The choice suited the character the street was to acquire. These houses were not intended as quickly built standard homes. They were given steep roofs, carefully laid brick façades and rich detailing that stood out in the young polder. The street acquired distinction without becoming ostentatious.

More than three quarters of a century later, the name immediately evokes an image for many people in Emmeloord. The street has become a recognisable part of the town's identity. Its original name, Goudenregenstraat, remains fascinating because it shows how major historical events and small administrative decisions can come together to shape the character of a place.

4. A Masterpiece in Brick

Some forms of beauty become visible only when someone teaches you how to look. For Jeroen, that person was his father. A technical engineer educated at Delft University of Technology, he had a deep appreciation for history, craftsmanship and skilled work. During visits to number 23, he could spend a long time simply looking at the house. He would point out the brickwork, lines in the façade, window openings, chimneys and the proportions between different parts of the building.

Where Jeroen initially saw mainly a beautiful wall, his father saw the work of designers, the choice of materials and the hands of the bricklayer. Gradually, Jeroen's own way of looking changed. A façade proved not to be static: light and shadow reveal different patterns throughout the day. Details that disappear from a distance gain meaning when viewed up close.



That way of looking helps explain why Koningin Julianastraat is so strong as a whole. The houses unmistakably belong together, yet they are not simple copies. One façade is more restrained, another more welcoming; here a bay window catches the eye, elsewhere an entrance, chimney, dormer or subtle shift in the brickwork. The beauty lies not in excess, but in proportion, materials and controlled craftsmanship.

Brick is the common language of the street. It is used not merely as a construction material, but almost as if the architects were drawing with it. Horizontal and vertical lines, patterns, façade endings and details around the windows give each house its own nuance. The houses demonstrate that functionality and beauty do not have to be opposites.

The most important lesson Jeroen's father taught him was ultimately a simple one: looking is different from seeing. Seeing happens automatically; looking requires attention. Those who walk slowly begin to notice how windows, roofs, chimneys, garden walls and garages form parts of a single composition. Craftsmanship deserves that attention precisely because so much of it initially appears quiet and self-evident.

5. The Architectural Walk – From Number 1 to Number 23

Koningin Julianastraat is best read on foot. The twelve listed houses, numbered 1 to 23, form two carefully designed ensembles. The first row consists of numbers 1 to 11; the second of numbers 13 to 23. Built during Emmeloord's earliest years as homes for the middle classes, they are closely related in design. Yet mirroring, differences in balconies, garages and individual details create a lively rhythm.

At number 1 it immediately becomes clear that the end wall, garden wall and original garage are all part of the design. Decorative brickwork follows the sloping roofline, while substantial chimneys give weight to the silhouette. Numbers 1, 3, 5 and 7 have balconies above shallow bay windows. Because alternating

houses are mirrored, doors, windows and balconies shift position, ensuring that repetition never becomes monotonous.

At number 3, the original rhythm of bay window, balcony and façade opening can still be recognised. Number 5 shows how a strong design can absorb changes over time without losing its identity. Around number 7, much of the original detailing has survived, including features of the former steel-framed windows.

Between the houses are garage blocks that are much more than practical spaces for cars. Their curved doors, small windows, lower roofs and carefully chosen materials ensure that they do not interrupt the residential blocks but instead connect them. Numbers 9 and 11 have no balconies, giving their façades a calmer and more solid appearance. Number 11 closes the first row with a distinctive end façade and a brick garden wall topped by characteristic spheres.



From number 13, the second ensemble begins as a mirror image. Balconies, bay windows, concrete details, chimneys and decorative brickwork return. Number 15 still has an original front door with distinctive detailing and stained glass. Number 17 stands out because of its broader dormer, demonstrating how a small departure from the pattern can add character. After number 19 there is another lower garage block, followed by numbers 21 and 23, which complete the row.

Number 23 marks the end of the walk and, at the same time, the beginning of the personal story. The end façade on the Meidoornstraat side, the lower extension, the garden wall with its spheres and the detached garage together form a single composition. Seen from across the street, the interplay between high and low, open and closed, large and small becomes particularly clear.

Looking back from number 23 towards number 1, the street once again becomes a whole: tall residential blocks, lower garages, balconies, dark roofs and chimneys. Up close, every detail tells its own story; from a distance, all those elements form one calm ensemble. The monumental value of the street therefore lies not only in individual doors, windows or façades, but above all in their coherence.

6. Number 23 – A House That Was Waiting for Us

The personal story of number 23 begins long before the house was purchased. Jeroen grew up in Nagele and only later realised how exceptional the architectural surroundings of his childhood had been. The family later lived in a house dating from 1901 in Hilversum, where the attraction of older homes became increasingly clear: not because they are perfect, but because the presence of earlier generations can still be felt.

After returning to the Noordoostpolder, the family initially lived in a comfortable newly built house. Yet Jeroen and Claire felt something was missing. Claire put it simply: a house does not have to be perfect, but it does need to have a story. Her own childhood by the old harbour in Genemuiden had also made her familiar with places where history is woven into everyday life.

Their search gradually shifted towards Emmeloord's more characteristic streets. Koningin Julianastraat caught their attention time and again, although owning a house there seemed almost beyond reach.



Then an estate agent kept insisting that Jeroen should view number 23. At the first viewing, much of the original interior had been hidden by alterations made in later decades. Even so, Jeroen and Claire both felt that the house had more to tell.

During the renovation, its original character returned step by step. Yellow floor tiles appeared beneath carpet, panelled doors were discovered behind later coverings, and wooden floors emerged from beneath fitted carpeting. These discoveries were not spectacular in financial terms, but they brought the residents ever closer to the original intentions of the designers and builders.

The central question became how to introduce modern comfort without losing the character of the house. Jeroen's interest in architecture and history complemented Claire's sense of atmosphere. Her experience with brocante, old materials and natural colours helped create an interior in which the past was not imitated, but remained naturally present.

The kitchen in the original angled extension illustrates that approach particularly well. The

high roof and visible trusses refer back to the building's history, while contemporary materials and everyday use make it clear that the house is not a museum. Above all, it had to be a home: a place where children grow up, friends stay for dinner, birthdays are celebrated and ordinary life unfolds.

The generous attic also offered opportunities. By adding an extra floor within the high roof, space was created for several bedrooms, allowing the house to grow with the blended family. In the years that followed, the rooms filled with memories. Maintaining a listed house did not feel like a burden, but rather became a way of getting to know it more intimately.

In 2019, the detached outbuilding at the rear of the property was also given a new life. It became Maison de L'Epée, a guesthouse that now welcomes visitors from the Netherlands and abroad. Many guests experience the same combination of history, tranquillity and hospitality that Jeroen and Claire felt when they first encountered number 23.

Yet the true meaning of the house lies mainly in ordinary moments: sitting together in the back room, looking out at the old walls, the guesthouse and the garden, enjoying the fireplace in winter or open doors in summer. At such moments it becomes clear that the residents of a monument never truly own it. They are temporary custodians. Each generation adds a chapter and eventually passes the house on.

7. Learning to Look

Perhaps the greatest gift of living on Koningin Julianastraat is not the monument itself, but a different way of looking. The street teaches that beauty rarely demands attention. It asks for time, care and sometimes, quite literally, a step backwards. A façade, garden wall, old door or tree gains meaning only when someone is willing to truly look at it.

History does not live only in castles and grand monuments. It also lives in everyday things: a front door opened by generations of residents, a garden wall that has endured decades of winters, trees that have grown with the street, and houses in which people continue to love, work, celebrate and say goodbye.

Jeroen's father taught him that careful looking is a form of appreciation. Number 23 confirmed that lesson. Original details reappeared from behind later finishes. Claire added a second insight: a monument remains truly alive only when it is used. A house without residents is a setting; the people who live there give it meaning.

The value of Koningin Julianastraat therefore lies not only in its architecture or its protected status. It also lies in the residents who maintain the façades, care for the gardens, greet one another and add their own memories to a story that began in the 1940s.

Heritage therefore means more than preserving bricks and mortar. It means passing on stories. Each generation receives a place for a while, adds something of its own and then hands it on. Anyone walking through Koningin Julianastraat after reading this story does not need to remember every architectural term. It is enough to slow down for a moment and look up.

Perhaps a chimney that previously went unnoticed will suddenly stand out, or the rhythm of the balconies, a distinctive dormer, or sunlight falling on one of the brick spheres. And perhaps an even more important insight will follow: this is not the only street with a story. Every street, every house and every village can become special when someone takes the time to truly look.

Sources and Acknowledgements

This concise edition is based exclusively on the complete Dutch working version of 'Koningin Julianastraat – Een straat die leert kijken'. The historical information in the original magazine is based on public sources, descriptions of listed monuments, archival research and the authors' personal experiences. Sources cited in the original include the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands (Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed), Nieuw Land Erfgoedcentrum, SIRC, Flevoland Erfgoed, Monumenten.nl, Canon Noordoostpolder, Visit Flevoland, municipal archives and consulted literature.

English translation of the concise Dutch edition. Images have deliberately not been included in this version.