Take the second street left into the Drapenierstraat, and then turn immediately right into the Vlamingstraat. At the end of this street, you come to the Van Loo almshouses (11). Unfortunately you cannot visit this court, but you do have a beautiful view of the garden.

In 1498, 13 ‘rooms with erfs’ were bequeathed to the men of Elisabeth’s Gasthuis, a hospital. It was stipulated that only priests or the impoverished were permitted to live here. The court originally consisted of a square of houses, however, as the Barrevesteeg had to be widened, one row was demolished so that you are now able to view this almshouse court through a gate. The house diagonally across from the entrance to the right is the regents’ room. The room was never used because the regents had their own quarters in the Elisabeth’s Gasthuis. With the almshouses behind you, turn left, back towards the Botermarkt.

Walk along V&D towards the traffic lights on the Grote Houtstraat. Take the Grote Houtstraat. Walk along V&D towards the traffic lights on the Grote Houtstraat. Take the Grote Houtstraat. Walk straight through a gate. The house diagonally across from the entrance to the right is the regents’ room. The room was never used because the regents had their own quarters in the Elisabeth’s Gasthuis. With the almshouses behind you, turn left, back towards the Botermarkt.

Cross the Anegang into the Warmoesstraat. The In den Groenen Tuin almshouses (12) are located at number 23 to your right (open between 10.00 and 12.00 hours, after ringing the bell). At the end of the Warmoesstraat, go right across the Oude Groenemarkt. Walk straight into the Damstraat. Take the first street left. Walk along the Nauwere Appelaarsteeg passing the back of Teylers Museum (right) and De Appelaarsteeg. At the end of the Nauwere Appelaarsteeg, turn left into the Wijde Appelaarsteeg.

On your right, you will find the Van Bakenes almshouses (13) at number 11. This is the oldest existing court of almshouses in the Netherlands, established in 1395. The official name of this court is ‘De Bakenesserkamer’, a reference to its rooms of residence. Before you enter, take note of the inscription above the gate, which translates as: ‘Dirck van Bakenes for women eight and twice six’. This refers to the number of women 8 + (2x6), thus a total of 20, who lived here with a minimum age of (8+2) x 6, thus 60 years. Having closed the gate, walk along a narrow path to the actual almshouse court. The houses as they now appear date back to the 17th century. In the garden, note the water pump with its wooden baldachin.

Walk through the court along the garden to the neighbouring almshouse court. The newest in Haarlem, the Johannes Enschede almshouses (14) were completed in 2007. This court of almshouses, named after the famous Haarlem printer, was designed by Haarlem cartoonist Joost Swarte and architect Henk Döll. This duo collaborated previously on the design of Haarlem’s Toneelschuur. Joost Swarte’s signature is clearly recognisable in the large stained-glass window in the complex.

Leave the almshouse court via the large grey door and turn left into the Lange Begijnestraat. At the end of this street, turn left into the Lange Begijnestraat. You will now arrive at the Toneelschuur and De Philharmonie concert hall. Go right across the Rivierschansmarkt and continue straight in the direction of the statue of Laurens Jansz. Coster.

You are back at the starting point of your walk: the Grote Markt.

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In principle, the almshouses are open from Monday to Friday from 10.00 to live in the former almshouses. Even today, it is still the modern day regents who determine who may experience learned that men were unable to cope with running a household. The Brouwers almshouses are an example of this, established for their quaint little houses and pretty gardens.

In the 17th and 18th century, the more wealthy families established almshouses as sheltered accommodation for the aged and elderly women in need. They were built in 1769 from the inheritance of Roeperszn. and his sister. They bequeathed their possessions to the Haarlem almshouses (8) established in 1472 by Jacob Huyge Brouwersgilde (Brewers Guild). About 100 breweries were located in Haarlem during this time.

In 1706, the building was converted into a kind of care home for the elderly. Unlike other almshouses, the Proveniershof was not for the needy. Most almshouses were founded by wealthy childless people. The founder of the Lutheran almshouses (2) will see the Lutheran community around 1648 and Lutheran almshouses were built by the Lutheran community. The almshouses were added. The caretaker’s house adjoins the church, while the regents’ room is in the extension. The regents’ room has gold leather upholstery, and the regents and minister would address the residents.

Most almshouses were founded by wealthy childless people. The founder of the Lutheran almshouses around 1648 and has always been closely associated with the Lutheran church. The church and almshouses were built on the grounds of the former Norbertine monastery. These monks wore white scapulars and were referred to as ‘Witte Heren’ (White Canons), which explains the name of the street. The four houses adjoining the church are the oldest. The five houses to the right were built later. At the back of the complex, at the regents’ room, there is an ‘outdoor pulpit’, which is actually the old herb garden of a former monastery. Prinsenhof is housed in a number of buildings around the Prinsenhof. The Gymnasium pupils refer to the garden as the ‘hortus’.

Turn left into the Jacobijnenstraat and at the junction, turn right into the Koningstraat. At number 20, take a quick look at the hall inside the Huis van Schagen (6), a particularly beautifully restored building. If the door is open, take a look at the (closed off) courtyard garden at the back. Turn right into the Snouckstraat and cross the Godemontse Oude Graft at the bridge. There you are now left. You will soon see the Botermarkt on your right. Keep to the right of the square until you reach a well-concealed passage to the Bruinings almshouses at number 9.

The Bruiningshofje almshouses (7) Jan Bruinrick Gerritsz, had seven! of the greenest streets of Haarlem. Continue straight along the Lange Raamstraat. You will reach the place to which this area attributes its name: a little square where 5 streets meet, hence the name ‘Vijfhoek’ meaning pentagon.

Leaving the almshouse court, go right once again. Beside number 30, a gateway is reminiscent of a third of almshouses that used to be located in this street: the Coomans almshouses (4), which were closed down in 1871 (these former almshouses are not open for viewing, please do not ring) At the end of the street is the Zijlstraat. Cross the Geldemontse Oude Graft and continue straight. Take the second street right and enter ‘t Pand through the archway. You are now walking along the back of the city hall and will arrive at the Prinsenhof.

The Prinsenhof (5) is actually the old herb garden of a former monastery where the city hall is now located. One of the most beautiful trees of Haarlem, the weeping beech, stands in the herb garden. At the back of the garden, there is a beautiful view to the Botermarkt, which is located just diagonally right and turn Botermarkt. At number 20, take a quick look at the hall inside the Huis van Schagen (6), a particularly beautifully restored building. If the door is open, take a look at the (closed off) courtyard garden at the back. Turn right into the Snouckstraat and cross the Godemontse Oude Graft at the bridge. There you are now left. You will soon see the Botermarkt on your right. Keep to the right of the square until you reach a well-concealed passage to the Bruinings almshouses at number 9.

Most almshouses were founded by wealthy childless people. The founder of the Bruiningshofje almshouses (7), Jan Bruinrick Gerritsz, had seven! of the greenest streets of Haarlem. Continue straight along the Lange Raamstraat. You will reach the place to which this area attributes its name: a little square where 5 streets meet, hence the name ‘Vijfhoek’ meaning pentagon.

Leaving the almshouse court and turn right. There you will see the Frans Looen aan de Waal almshouses (3) at number 24. Frans Looen was a merchant from Amsterdam who spent the final part of his life in Haarlem. He bequeathed his fortune to Haarlem’s poor. Construction of eleven almshouses commenced in 1607. A few years later, five more houses were added. The caretaker’s house adjoins the church, while the regents’ room is in the extension. The regents’ room has gold leather wall-paper! During restoration, the number of houses was reduced to ten. To be eligible for a house, one had to be at least 50 years of age and born in Haarlem, or have resided in Haarlem for at least 6 years. A meeting space was built in the garden a few years ago.

In 1576, the building was converted into a kind of care home for the elderly. Unlike other almshouses, the Proveniershof was not for the needy. What is unusual about these almshouses is that people paid money to live in them, hence the name Proveniershof. A provenier was someone who paid to live in a house. There are 67 homes in total, of which 38 are located around the garden. The remaining houses are situated in neighbouring streets. Married couples were also permitted to live here.

In summer, fresh coffee and pastries are served from the window on the terrace of the congenial ‘Hofje zonder Zorgen’ lunchroom.

Walk through the court and leave by the large gate and you reach the best-known shopping street in Haarlem, the Grote Houtstraat. Turn right and take the second street right, the Korte Houtstraat. This is one of the greenest streets of Haarlem. Continue straight along the Nieuwe Kerk (1613, Manor of De Key), pass the church, turn right and then continue straight along the Lange Annastraat. You will reach the place to which this area attributes its name: a little square where 5 streets meet, hence the name ‘Vijfhoek’ meaning pentagon.