



BUILDING A LIFE

Jonathan Matfin

The Hayes built a business, a home and started a family



Happy at home..Julie and baby Max

IMAGINE this: you're heavily pregnant with your second child, you're trying to start a new business with your husband – and you're in the middle of building a six-bedroom family home from scratch.

Sounds like a pretty tall order.

But that's what life was like for Julie Hayes and her husband Anthony when they took on an ambitious self-build project to launch their

own construction firm – while expecting a new baby.

The Berkhamsted couple began their massive task in May 2006 after buying a property with a lot of land in a private Potten End road.

Anthony, 47, and Julie, 33, had spent four years buying houses to refurbish and sell on, moving nine times in that period.

But when they signed papers for the land in Frithsden Copse, they knew exactly what they wanted to do – demolish the existing property, build a dream family home, and use the new house as a showpiece for their own construction company, created in 2005.

Anthony said: "We'd always had a desire to build our own house and we wanted to create a close team with local tradesmen.

"This was the benchmark – if this went well, we'd go ahead in the business."

The husband-and-wife team hired architect Peter Knightley and head builder Perry Daniels – both of whom were to become close friends, as well as core members of the couple's fresh building firm, Frithsden Construction Ltd.

And with top people on board, the couple's project soon began to progress.

Their new family home, built to high-specifications and with unique features including a giant rear window, was built while they lived on the site's existing property with their young son Joshua, now six.

The couple's baby, Max, now one, was born in November 2006, and in May this year, as soon as their new house was habitable, the couple and their children moved in and held a 'wrecking party' to celebrate the demolition of the old property.

Once finished, the family's new house featured six bedrooms and four bathrooms on three storeys, with heating provided by



Spacious kitchen



Cosy lounge

an environmentally-friendly biomass boiler for about £700 a year.

The total cost of the project was about £1.6million, and the property is now valued at about £2.5million.

Julie said: "There was so much pressure, and to do it on budget, it was unbelievable."

She added: "This house wouldn't be here if it wasn't for the three parties [architect, builder and Anthony and Julie] working closely together."

With their dream home complete, the couple and their architect and chief builder have turned their attention to new projects under the title of Frithsden Construction Ltd.

Current work being done by the company, which prides itself on an ethical approach to business, includes two new houses in Felden with the estimated sale price of each starting at £1.6million.

For more information on Frithsden Construction Ltd, based in Lower Kings Road, Berkhamsted, call 01442 866221.