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## **2021 Women in Construction: Jess Tones, Managing Director, Development & Construction, Senné**

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What steps have you taken to ensure the continued success of your firm? Passion and quality drive everything we do. Development is a beautiful process but it can also be tricky if not structured

efficiently. At Senné, we control each step of our development projects, affording us the opportunity to adjust thoughtfully, right up until the units sell. We work on challenging sites with a mix of new construction and renovations, breathing new life back into these homes while respecting their history. As we begin work on future developments, we'll continue to put craftsmanship at the forefront to ensure we're bringing our best to the market.

Why should women consider a career in construction? Over the last decade I have seen the construction industry evolve for the better. Gone are the days of the "good 'ol boys club" that felt impossible to break into. The beauty of construction is that the proof gets built; if you put the work in and want to succeed it shows, regardless of your gender. For those who love to get their hands a little dirty and take advantage of every opportunity to learn –from architects and engineers to plumbers and excavators – it can be an extraordinarily rewarding endeavor. One thing is for sure, it is never boring.

What was your greatest professional achievement or most notable project in the last 12 months? The last year was challenging for every industry but buildings are not built remotely. Senné projects never truly stopped and major steps were required to facilitate progress, from creating and adapting new jobsite protocols to keep our staff and contractors safe, to navigating everchanging supply chain and labor issues. We were able to pivot quickly in order to keep all seven of our projects throughout Cambridge moving without sacrificing the design or quality of our product; for that I am tremendously proud of the outpouring of effort from each member of our team and our industry partners.

What are you most looking forward to post-pandemic? Development and construction at their heart are collaborative, tactile processes, and while we've been fortunate to be with our teammates throughout the pandemic as essential services, we are all looking forward to working face-to-face with our consultants and partners again. We are also excited to see how the development boom continues to grow and thrive — it never stopped during the pandemic; it merely (and quickly) paused. We still have a housing shortage in the Boston area so we're hopeful our development pace can only increase to keep up with the demand.

How have you adapted and changed in the last 12 months? Our team stepped up and wore more "hats" to respond to the tough construction arena this past year, all while providing support to our industry partners. Our ability to act quickly while maintaining flexibility has been critical; this has always been a key component of our business model, but it became even more important as the pandemic progressed. Now, more than ever, people are spending more time at home so functionality of space has become vital. Senné has always created functional residential projects but now we fully tell the story of how people live in the homes we build.

Starting out in the construction business, who or what empowered you? Throughout my career I have been fortunate enough to work with leaders who provided me with invaluable opportunities to grow in this field. As one of Senné's first employees in 2009, I handled design development studies; I returned to Senné in 2018 and was responsible for the inception and build-out of the self-performing construction management team. The faith that the company's leadership has always

placed in me to execute such major initiatives is what empowers me daily. I often say that through meticulous preparation and plenty of effort, you can get things done right the first time.

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