

BUSINESS



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Wednesday, August 28, 2002

**Dow Jones
industrials**  -94.60
8,824.41

**S&P
500**  -13.13
934.82

**Bloomberg
Jacksonville**  -0.97
276.37

**Nasdaq
composite**  -43.96
1,347.78

New courthouse site has property values going up

City swept up in market as it tries to acquire land

By Earl Daniels

Times-Union business writer

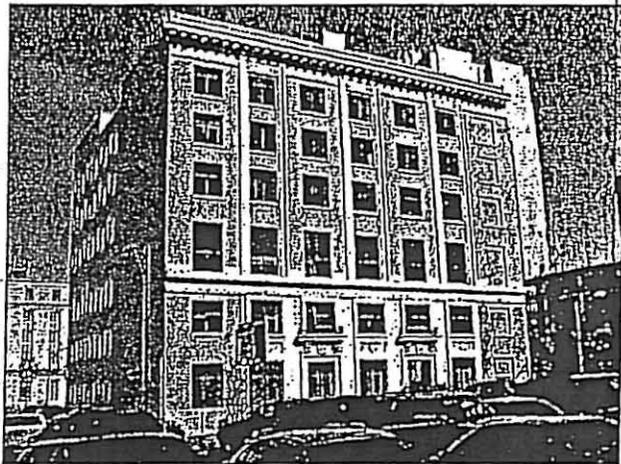
The Better Jacksonville Plan is creating better values for those who own property around the site of the new courthouse.

And judging by the way city officials fought in court during a recent condemnation trial, it

appears property values are rising even more than expected.

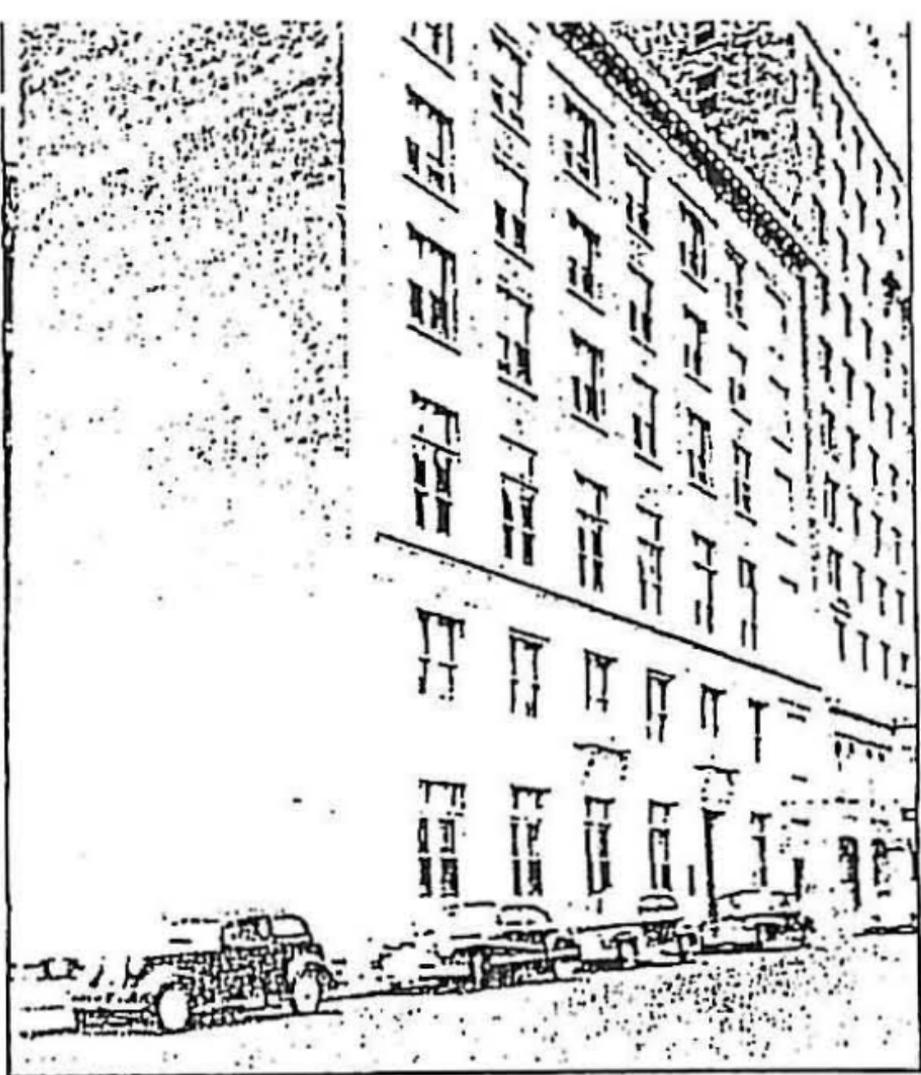
Earlier this week, city officials filed a request for a new trial in Duval County Circuit Court and for jurors who participated in a recent condemnation trial to be interviewed.

Last week, a 12-person jury decided the city will have to pay \$3.9 million to take over the old Southern Bell Telephone and Telegraph Building on 325 W. Adams St. The price the seller wanted: \$4.7 million. The price the city wanted to pay:



— Special
The former Southern Bell Telephone and Telegraph Building at 325 W. Adams St. is located on land where the new courthouse is planned.

See PROPERTY, Page F-7



—Special

The city may have to pay \$3.9 million for the Southern Bell Telephone and Telegraph Building, shown when it was used by Southern Bell, if a jury verdict stands.

Property: Nearby bank building's value going up

From Page F-1

\$1.2 million.

Most of the land needed to build the city's new \$211 million courthouse, about a seven block area, has been acquired by the city.

Condemnation is the process used by government officials to buy property from private owners to redevelop or to use for public purposes. If the two sides cannot agree on a price, the owner can request a jury trial to determine fair market value.

The most recent case and other negotiations that are taking place are indicators of the rising downtown property values.

"When private property is taken without the owner's consent, Florida law provides that full compensation includes any increase in value due to the anticipation of the project for which the property is taken. In addition, other market forces are at work," said Andy Brigham, an attorney who is representing the owner of the Southern Bell Building, 325 W. Adams St. Ltd.

Yesterday, Bruce Page, an attorney representing the city, said he preferred not to comment on the case while it is pending.

According to the city's motion, which was filed Aug. 23, one of the jurors discussed the trial with Douglas Solomon, a witness in the case, at Solomon's business, Solomon's Bargain Center, during a week-end recess.

"[The juror's] conversation with Mr. Solomon constitutes juror misconduct," Page said in court documents.

Yesterday, Solomon said he had no comment when asked about his conversation with the juror.

The bank building sold for \$400,000 in 1993.

city officials in another eminent domain case that he says is expected to be settled out of court. He owns the Tucker Building at Pearl and Adams streets and a 220-space surface parking lot. The property is within the site of the courthouse.

"I am going to settle with them, I just want a fair price," he said.

Downtown property values are increasing. A case in point, is the Marine National Bank Building at 300 W. Adams St.

Solomon owned the building before he sold it to Adam Klayman of Ponte Vedra Beach for \$1.6 million in 1999. Klayman recently took the property off the market because of the rapid changes in the area.

The property was listed at \$3 million, and Klayman rejected previous sales offers.

"I had gotten some offers that were not quite there," Klayman said. "It is worth a lot more because I am so close to where the new courthouse is going to be built."

The 36,600-square-foot bank building sold for \$400,000 in 1993.

Brigham said the Marine National Bank Building is an example of why his client should be paid the amount the jury awarded.

"In this case, there is no better indicator of value than the immediate property located across the street from the courthouse site," said Brigham, referring to the Marine National Bank.

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