

# U.S. Paid for Routine Nixon Home Repairs

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A government breakdown of \$1.3 million spent to improve President Nixon's properties in California and Florida shows that large sums of federal money have been used for what appear to be routine house repairs and for furniture for the President's den.

The official accounting lists \$4,834 spent by the government for furnishings in Mr. Nixon's den in San Clemente, \$3,200 for tiling a roof, \$998 for replacement of a "hazardous" wrought iron railing, \$1,600 for window alterations, \$1,105 for cleaning the beach, \$1,950 for pruning "hazardous" dead tree branches, and \$1,950 for repairing a wall.

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\$141 for a swivel chair, \$268 for two chairs, \$544 for two more chairs, and \$86 for decorative pillows.

Permanent improvements made to the properties include \$1,853 for a flagpole in San Clemente, \$476 to paint the flag pole, \$338 for an exhaust fan in San Clemente, \$314 for a sea wall ladder in Key Biscayne, \$475 for a swimming pool cleaner in Key Biscayne, \$621 for an ice-maker for Secret Service agents in Key Biscayne, and \$826 for storm shutters in Key Biscayne.

These items are in addition to such previously reported expenditures for the San Clemente house as \$13,500 for new heaters in San Clemente, \$3,800 for a connection to the city sewer system in San Clemente, \$184,174 for interior and exterior electrical work, \$2,400 for septic tank repairs, \$42,500 for a wall, \$10,612 for roadways and parking lots, \$2,800 for a swimming pool heater, \$11,561 for a redwood fence, and \$22,000 for guard houses.

The breakdown showed

The White House yesterday referred all questions on the improvements to the GSA and Secret Service. The GSA said all but two of the improvements to the San Clemente house were requested by the Secret Service for security purposes. The Secret Service confirmed that it had asked for many of the improvements, but said more time would be required to confirm each one.

Among the government expenditures for furnishings to the President's den are \$472 for a leather top desk, \$171 for a chair, \$504 for a sofa, \$201 for a club chair,

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that the taxpayers have a big investment in the plants, trees, lawns, and landscaping of the President's San Clemente property. In the past four years the government has spent more than \$100,000 for landscaping at the California estate, nearly \$10,000 for weed removal more than \$8600 for plants, and \$5,600 for moving trees.

been spent on permanent Altogether, \$703,367 has been spent on permanent improvements to the San Clemente home and \$579,907 to the Key Biscayne complex, which includes two houses owned by the President.

The figures do not include \$600,000 spent to operate and maintain the Key Biscayne compound or an as yet undetermined sum spent to operate the Western White House. The figures also do not include any expenditures made by government agencies other than the General Services Administration.

For example, some \$340,000 was spent by the Army Corps of Engineers to install a helicopter landing pad at the Key Biscayne location.

The GSA breakdown

shows that large sums have been spent on items normally considered to be related to the protection of the President and the prevention of communications breakdowns.

These payments include \$42,293 for a "security" lighting system at Key Biscayne, \$128,708 for bullet-resistant glass doors and windows at Key Biscayne \$4,786 for removing a low wall and planting high hedges at Key Biscayne and \$7,631 for bullet-resistant glass at the San Clemente swimming pool.

Other items for repairs and improvements that home owners routinely make were defended by the Secret Service and GSA as being necessary for the protection of the President.

GSA's audit of expenditures labeled \$1,950 for pruning trees as being for "eliminating safety hazards caused by dead branches." Some \$3,800 for landscaping, including removal of dry weeds, was listed as being to "eliminate fire hazard." Replacement of a wrought iron railing for \$998 was because the railing was "hazardous."

Arthur F. Sampson administrator of GSA, said \$1,600 spent for window alterations was for "security" purposes.

Carl H. Davis, the San Clemente building inspector who approved the building permit for the windows, said the windows were replaced because "they just wouldn't close properly."

"The windows were of wood sash and they had dry rot in the sills and frames,"

he told The Washington Post. "They were just falling apart."

Davis said the windows were replaced with aluminum sashes.

John W. Warner, assistant to the director of the Secret Service, said the existing heaters in the San Clemente home were replaced for security reasons because they were unsafe.

Davis, the San Clemente building inspector who approved the permit for the new heaters, said the old equipment was corroded, antiquated, and "inoperative."

"If you had bought the house, you'd have done it

too," he said.

Sampson, the GSA administrator, defended the connection to the city sewer system as being necessary for "guests like (Soviet Communist Party Leader Leonid I.) Brezhnev, for government guests, for functions."

He said the government paid for only \$3,800 of the \$9,000 cost of the new line because the remaining share of the pipe was for the personal use of the President and his family.

Warner, the Secret Service official, said the line was for the use of Secret Service agents as well as for the personal use if the President.

Davis, who also approved the permit for the sewer line, said the septic tank that came with the San Clemente house when the President bought it in 1969 represented a violation of the city building code. He said it was the last septic tank in the city and should have been eliminated long ago.

In addition, he said, it would have been illegal to build the swimming pool that was installed by the President on the property without a connection to the city sewer system.

Davis said the sewer line services the President's residence, the pool, and a guest house where the President's daughters and their husbands stay.

He said Secret Service agents have their own offices that are separate from the President's residence and generally live in apartments in the downtown section of the city.

The sewer connection "had to be done to comply with the law," he said.

One Secret Service official, who asked not to be quoted by name, laughed repeatedly when many of the expenditures said to be for national security were read off.

"Frankly, I have a feeling GSA is trying to squirm their way out by blaming these things on us," he said. However, Warner, the assistant to the director of the Secret Service, said he found authorizations by his agency for many of the expenditures. He said he hasn't yet had time to check

them all.

Both the Secret Service and GSA agreed that the personal furniture and the flagpole at the San Clemente residence had not been requested by the Secret Service and were not for security purposes.

Sampson, the GSA chief, said GSA "has" to provide office furniture for government officials "anywhere, as long as it's reasonable."

He said the furniture is still owned by GSA, but since presidents are given government offices by law after they retire, President Nixon will "keep it until he dies." After that, Sampson said, the furniture will revert to the government.

Sampson acknowledged that there is no specific congressional act authorizing GSA to furnish the private residences of presidents while in office. But he said a government official such as a senator could take furniture to his home, so long as he does not receive more government furniture than is authorized.