

Real Estate

refurbishments needed, along with a suggested timeline for those services. Tutton said he can often get clients a better deal by timing their work in a smart way.

"I can tell them when a particular subcontractor we work with might be running a special or be in a slow time," he said.

"We can also recommend the times of the year to get certain things done, such as when to paint or when to refinish mahogany doors."

The cost for this program? An annual contract starts at just less than \$1 per square foot of the house, that is square feet under roof, which includes covered porches, since maintenance work is also done on patios, in courtyards and on summer kitchens. In addition to the standard maintenance package, residents may purchase a pool maintenance package, air-conditioning maintenance package as ancillary services.

Whitehall is also available on an on-call basis for special maintenance jobs around the house.

For example, Smith had just had them refurbish all of her landscaping

lighting in preparation for a large party she was hosting in which she would be using her outdoor living space for entertaining. She has also used them to find reputable contractors to do work for her that was beyond the scope of the technicians.

"They're so responsive, and I would trust anyone Whitehall recommended to me," Smith said. "It's worth it for the peace of mind and not having to worry about managing my home."

For residents wishing to be slightly more involved in managing their own homes, The Caretakers provide a service starting at \$1,200 per year which includes monthly inspections of the home and weekly walk-throughs to check for problems when the owner is away.

The Caretakers also photograph the house using thermal imaging to point out any hot spots, literally, any places where outlets are overloaded or heat is seeping into the house and sapping energy efficiency.

Owner John Huryn said the imaging is a great tool to detect problems that

even a careful manual inspection might not show.

Owner of Huryn Construction (formerly AAC Builders) on Ocean Drive, Huryn said The Caretakers grew out of the needs of the clients living in the homes that he had built, especially in Windsor, Orchid and John's Island.

"We started the company because people always called us to ask us to do things or to ask where they could get these things done," he said.

In addition to the monthly inspections and weekly walk-throughs, which are included in the annual contract, The Caretakers are available for a variety of services.

They have painters and carpenters on staff to handle odd jobs and, as Whitehall does, The Caretakers have a vast resource of local professionals who can handle projects that require special skill or expertise.

The Caretakers brochure advertises that they will help close up a home for the summer and then set everything back up again right before you come home. They will pressure clean the patio furniture, take photos before they remove it and store it, then set it up ex-

actly the same way when you head south.

They can have the refrigerator stocked, the pool turned on and heated and flowers on your table when you arrive.

They will even pick you, your family or your guests up from the airport.

Seasonal residents can also hire The Caretakers to prepare their home for a coming tropical storm or hurricane, bringing things in from outside and mounting hurricane shutters. These services are billed on an hourly basis and must be arranged well ahead of a storm.

Whitehall also provides home monitoring as an ancillary service. Clients who sign up for home monitoring receive special post-hurricane treatment. After a storm passes, they will drive by and enter the home if necessary, do a damage assessment and call residents to let them know what if any repairs are needed.

"We will take whatever steps are necessary to secure the home," Tutton said. "And then once the power is back on we contact the owner and let them know the status of the house."

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