

Woodstock Hospital occupiers protest in Civic Centre

By [Tariro Washinyira](#)

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About 40 members of Reclaim the City protested inside the Cape Town Civic Centre on Tuesday morning, 6 August. They demanded that Cape Town Mayor Dan Plato meet with them before making a decision to evict them from the Woodstock Hospital (which they have renamed Cissie Gool House).



About 40 members of Reclaimthe City protested inside the Cape Town Civic Centre on Tuesday morning. Photo: Tariro Washinyira

The group, which included children, resisted attempts by law enforcement officers and security guards to remove them from the centre. They held banners which read: "Redistribute all public land!", "Where people live matters". They chanted: "We shall not be moved" and "We want Plato!"

The organisation addressed the mayor in a letter: "We have written to you but you have refused to meet. Even the slum lords have the decency to look at their tenants in the eye before they evict them."

"In this old broken hospital, we have built a community that we are proud of with the little resources we have. We are newborn babies, we are students, we are elderly and we are disabled people. We are a community that celebrates birthdays, marriages and deaths across race and religion."

It appears the protest was sparked by a city statement that left unclear the status of promised state subsidised housing near the city centre. The city said it had cancelled the request for proposals for the “Woodstock Hospital site, the public open space next to Woodstock Hospital, Fruit and Veg in Roeland Street, New Market Street and the Pickwick Street social housing site on 29 July 2019”. This, the city said, was so that it could “follow a different process for the disposal of these sites that are earmarked for social housing opportunities”.

Nevertheless, the city said: “Despite conflicting reports, the city can confirm that the affordable social housing opportunities planned for the Salt River Market site and the Pine Road site are still on track and are making progress. The Pickwick Street Transitional housing site was completed in May 2019.”

Plato later met with the protesting group. He said, “We will do what is necessary with regard to the future of the Woodstock site and you will be informed within the next couple of weeks. I think the intention of the City of Cape Town is to buy that building from provincial government.”

Meanwhile housing activists have set up a website guide for people facing eviction.

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