

ICAC  
demo

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# 120 stage protest at ICAC

By CHRIS DOBSON

IN AN unprecedented public protest yesterday, about 120 angry residents stormed their way into the Independent Commission Against Corruption's (ICAC) headquarters demanding the anti-graft body take up their claims of alleged corruption.

This is the first time in the commission's 17-year existence that a group of such size has gone to the body's Central offices and called on the ICAC to investigate cases in this manner.

An ICAC spokesman said this type of protest had not happened before but played down the demonstration even though the police were called to evict the group.

"About 100 people turned up and wanted to make individual complaints. We are now taking down their personal particulars so that we can contact them," he said.

"We are dealing with it in the normal way."

He declined to provide further details on the demonstration which lasted from mid-morning until after lunch.

Police took no action against the placard-carrying protesters, who made their way up to the lobby on the eighth floor of the ICAC's Murray Road headquarters.

At one stage members of the group, all Beacon Heights flat-owners, claimed the commission's officers asked the police to shut the doors to stop them entering the lobby.

"There were women and children in there and we could hardly breathe when they closed them [the doors]," said Mr Richard Maher, a protester.

"There was a bit of an argument and then the ICAC sent a couple of investigators out."

He said the officers agreed to allow groups of 10 into the offices to leave their names and identity card numbers.

Police said the ICAC officer handling the protest was senior investigator Mr Shiley Chau.

Mr Maher and another Beacon Heights resident, Mr Bosco Tung Yiu-hui, claimed an ICAC investigator told a number of women protesters waiting outside they were wasting their time.

"He told the ladies they were talking nonsense," said Mr Tung.

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# Residents storm ICAC offices

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Every citizen has the right to complain, you cannot stop us from reporting the case.

Mr Tung said the flat-owners, who hired two coaches for the trip to Central, were angry.

Later the ICAC said it would send a team of investigators to the Beacon Heights club house at 8.30 am tomorrow to listen to residents' complaints.

The flat owners took the action to force the commission to take up their case which had already been turned down twice.

The residents claim Swire Properties, which built Beacon Heights in Kowloon Tong, secretly sold their car parks and a shopping arcade in December to investors under the name of Team Yick Investment.

They maintain Swire sold the 689-lot car park and asso-

ciated shops for \$80 million, at an estimated cost of \$89,000 per space.

Mr Maher said Team Yick then priced the spaces at \$200,000 each with a \$30,000 deposit required.

So far, the group has only sold about 150 spaces, but the shops and their associated 36 parking lots have already been resold by Team Yick for \$7.5 million.

Most residents have since boycotted the car parks after

fees were doubled to \$2,000 a month, leaving vehicles jamming nearby footpaths.

"We're short of parking spaces but there is no alternative in the area. Nobody asked them to be so greedy and to use such a reprehensible approach," Mr Maher said.

Residents have made three separate complaints to the ICAC since December which have all been turned down by the commission.