

Three Occupy Wall Street protesters busted for trespass in church-owned lot

Hunger strikers were trying to stake claim on Trinity Church property near Duarte Square

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Mariela Lombard for New York Daily News

Three Occupy Wall Street protesters are taken into custody at Juan Pablo Duarte Square on Sixth Ave. in lower Manhattan.

Three Occupy Wall Street protesters were arrested Sunday afternoon near Duarte Square for trespassing on a vacant lot owned by Trinity Wall Street, cops said.

Shae Willes, 22, and Diego Ibanez, 23, both from Utah, and Brian Udall, 18, from Montana, were arrested at Sixth Ave. and Canal St. around noon.

The real estate group, who also owns historic Trinity Church, complained that the three strikers and three supporters slept overnight on the site, the protesters said in a statement.

The three men started a hunger strike at noon on Saturday to gain the church's attention. They want to use the 20,000-square-foot lot, adjacent to the square, as a temporary occupation site for their movement.

A Trinity spokesman told the Associated Press that the lot "is not available nor is it suitable for large-scale assemblies or encampments."

The group said they slept overnight at the site without tents or sleeping bags, which the city has prohibited. They returned to the square immediately following their release and were evicted when curfew set in around 9 p.m.

Their plan is to go back and try to sleep in the Trinity [lot] again," said strike support team leader Laura Gottesdiener.

This strike is part of a month-long campaign to gain access to the site, where Trinity is developing a residential high-rise tower, the occupiers said.

The trio submitted a letter to Trinity Wall Street Sunday night, notifying them of three additional strikers who joined the group, along with a list of demands.

They want their trespass charges dropped as well as a meeting to discuss the future of the site.