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The Umvoti Mounted Rifles Hall in Greytown (left) has become home to vagrants. (Right) The broken windows and doors of the iconic building in Okes Street.

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Greytown historical building IN SHAMBLES

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THE Umvoti Mounted Rifles Hall, situated near the Umvoti Library on Okes Street, has become a home to vagrants and whoonga addicts. Residents have since called on the authorities to revamp the building, which is one of the historical sites in Greytown which are usually a top priority in terms of preservation programmes.

The hall was built in the 1880s and was used as the Masonic Lodge, a military hospital, a courthouse, and a library and then the Umvoti Mounted Rifles hall. The *Gazette*

learnt that the building falls under the national Department of Public Works.

A resident near the building said: "The department has allowed vagrants and whoonga addicts to vandalise this building. "Last year, the entire building caught fire and I was hoping this was going to raise a red flag to the authorities and that they would do something about it," he said. Other residents claimed that the building is becoming used as a drug den with high amounts of criminal activity taking place.

A security officer from B-Secure, Bonginkosi Ngubane, confirmed that a group of suspects were removed from the building after numerous complaints were received from

the residents about vandalism at the property. "Our officers had to ask for the intervention of the SAPS to dislodge the people from the building. We have received complaints that the building has become a hub of criminal activities. It's filthy and stinking. It's becoming an eyesore to the residents of Greytown. The building is close to the library, that is used by locals and school children," he said. Mbulelo Baloyi from the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Human Settlements confirmed that the building in question "is the responsibility of the National Public Works", however further comment on the matter was not made available at the time of print deadline.