

# A New Beginning for the Castle's Basement

*View of the basement showing the refrigeration equipment rooms, 2018.*

Over the decades, water incursion and vandalism had left Lucknow's basement in bad shape. One hundred years ago, the basement was a fully finished and well-appointed work space and living quarters for the Plants' domestic staff. It was also the heart of the home's physical plant, housing the technologically advanced infrastructure that afforded a comfortable and modern lifestyle for the homeowners. By 2017, when preservation work began, the basement's plaster walls had almost completely crumbled, woodwork and paint were water damaged, and the home's original appliances, including refrigeration and central vacuum motors were so heavily corroded, they were almost unrecognizable.

The restoration team's approach to preserving this part of the house was conservative - the basement was stabilized, but not fully restored to its original appearance. Rather than reconstructing the basement, the conservation effort focused on cleaning and preserving what remained. For example, walls and ceilings that had lost their plaster were left that way, so that the terra cotta tile and steel beam construction remained exposed, providing evidence of how the home was built.



**Ask about our guided tours for an intimate look at the Castle's state-of-the-art basement.**



*Laundry room sinks after conservation, 2017.*

*Walter Eayrs of Blackburn Building Conservation examining remaining paint finish on the vault door, 2017.*