



**TOWN OF WESTPORT
PLANNING & ZONING DEPARTMENT**

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To Whom It May Concern

From: Laurence Bradley
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RE: CELLAR (As defined in the Westport Zoning Regulations)

In a flood zone a cellar can only exist if the floor is at or above the base flood level, is level with grade on at least two sides per FEMA requirements, and has at least 50% of the perimeter with 50% or more of the headroom below the grade required to meet the cellar definition (see below).

If for example,

A part of a building which is not a crawl space located mostly underground, having one-half (1/2) or more of its headroom below the level of the finished grade for at least 50% of its perimeter. A cellar shall not be deemed a story, but shall be counted in floor area and height measurements.

In order to meet the cellar definition the following steps need to be taken:

1. The final grade needs to be determined. This is determined by the surveyor or project engineer and shown on the proposed site plan. The building elevations must match the grading plan.
2. The headroom of the cellar needs to be determined. To determine the headroom in the cellar, subtract the cellar floor elevation from the first floor elevation. Then subtract the space occupied by the joists (usually 1 foot). This determines the headroom or ceiling height and should be confirmed by the cross-section on the building plans.
3. In order to determine the elevation/grade to use in determining the cellar, one half of the headroom is added to the cellar floor elevation. This new elevation is located on the grading plan. A review of the building elevations should confirm the same information by determining where half of the headroom intersects the grade.

4. Fifty per cent (50%) or more of the cellar area perimeter needs to have fifty per cent (50%) or more of the headroom below the finished grade (mostly underground). Fifty per cent (50%) of the perimeter is determined by measuring the entire perimeter of the area of the building having the cellar and dividing by 2. Areas of the house that do not have floor space on the same level are not included (i.e. garages on slabs on the level above, crawlspaces, etc.)
5. The lower level is a cellar if more than one half of the perimeter has one half of its headroom below the finished grade.

Example:

First floor elevation (msl)	101'
Lower floor elevation (msl)	<u>-90.5'</u>
	10.5'
Joists	<u>- 1.0'</u>
Lower floor ceiling height	9.5'

One half lower floor height	4.75'
Lower floor elevation	<u>+90.5'</u>
	95.25'

This is the elevation used to determine where 50% of the headroom is at the level of the finished grade 95' (msl)

Measure the perimeter of the lower level 228'

Determine the location of the finished grade around the building for the 50% headroom 95'

Determine how much of the Perimeter of the building is below 95' by using the finished grade plan 180'

180/228 = 79% of the lower level of the building has its headroom 50% or more below grade; therefore, the lower level is a cellar.