

What is a Cellar?

A cellar is a subterranean or partially underground storage space, typically found in residential or commercial buildings. Unlike a basement, which is often habitable and may include living spaces, a cellar is primarily designed for storage (e.g., wine, food, utilities) and lacks the thermal comfort or natural light required for regular occupancy.

Context (vs. Basement)

- **Cellar:** Used for storage, often unheated, with minimal ventilation and insulation.
- **Basement:** Designed for habitation, with compliance to **Part B (Fire Safety)**, **Part C (Site Preparation & Resistance to Contaminants and Moisture)**, and **Part L (Conservation of Fuel and Power)** of the **Building Regulations (England)**.

Synonyms

- Underground storage
- Wine cellar (if specialised)
- Root cellar (historical usage)

Related Terms

1. **Basement** – A habitable underground floor, subject to stricter Building Regulations.
2. **Sub-floor ventilation** – Critical to prevent damp in cellars (Approved Document C).
3. **Tanking** – Waterproofing method for below-ground structures.
4. **Condensation control** – Required to prevent mould in poorly ventilated cellars.
5. **Party Wall Act 1996** – May apply if excavating near adjoining properties.
6. **Damp-proof course (DPC)** – Essential for moisture resistance (Approved Document C).
7. **Mechanical Ventilation with Heat Recovery (MVHR)** – Sometimes retrofitted to improve air quality.

Practical Examples

- A Victorian terraced house with an original coal cellar, now repurposed for wine storage.
- A retrofit project adding a sump pump and tanking to prevent groundwater ingress in a cellar.

Regulatory References

- **Approved Document C (Resistance to Contaminants and Moisture)** – Covers waterproofing and ventilation.
- **Approved Document B (Fire Safety)** – Relevant if converting a cellar into a habitable space.