

GENERAL COMMENTS

- You should be aware that (the only) access into the cave is via a lobby located beneath the upper floors of a house in separate ownership and I recommend you seek advice from your legal advisers on the legal implications of this. There is no ceiling or fire protection above the lobby such that timber structure of the first floor of that house is exposed.
- There is a small, enclosed, area (open to the sky) on the west side of the house, with access via a small “window” at the back of the understairs cupboard in the entrance hall: The fuel oil supply pipes and several drainage pipes pass through this area. One of the drainage pipes, at ground level, and which is almost certainly of asbestos-cement composition, is thought to conduct rainwater (from an adjoining building or yard in other ownership) and runs into a concrete channel on the east side of the cave - which in turn appears to discharge onto the road on the south side of the property. No other property has access to the enclosed area referred to. I recommend you ask your legal advisers to verify ownership and maintenance responsibilities in respect of this area, and to verify rights of drainage over it.
- A series of holes (or two series of holes) have been drilled in the external walls just above ground level, a similar series of holes has been drilled in the concrete at ground level adjoining the external walls, and small plastic plugs have been installed in many of the window and door frames in the house. These are associated with treatments undertaken in the past against termites; I believe the most recent treatment has a guarantee with some years still to run and you should ask your legal advisers to check this and obtain the relevant paperwork. I understand there was a serious termite problem in the village in 1972; this might have been why (and when) some parts of the upper floors were renewed - but I regret I have no definite information on this. I did not myself find any termites in the house but you will be advised further on this because the present owners are obliged to have an expertise undertaken – which I believe is supposed to be done *before* you are asked to sign the *compromis de vente*.
- The external walls are mis-shapen in places, for example across the west side of the second floor accommodation, and where there is a slight bulge in the north wall. I located a vertically-aligned crack in the external rendering at high level in the north wall, similar cracks below both sides of the window in the north wall of the kitchen, and a crack above the right hand side of the window in the east wall of the sitting room – extending up on the right hand side of the two windows above, into the projecting tiles at eaves level: The crack running up the east wall has occurred at what I suspect is the junction of two (formerly) separate buildings, and has no doubt resulted from a small amount of differential movement over the years, which is not especially unusual to find in a property of this type and age. As far as I could tell none of the cracks referred to is recent, and none is thought to represent a serious problem, nevertheless I suggest you have the cracks raked out and filled in due course, if only to keep the structure weathertight, and keep an eye on them in the future.
- Some of the rendered facing on the cut stone sections around the door and window openings is chipped, or has broken away (such as at the bottom of the pilasters either side of the main entrance door, and on the sill of the left hand window in the east wall of the kitchen) and the finish has broken away where applied to steel lintels, now corroding, across the small window in the north wall of the kitchen. The sill of the double doors in the north wall of the utility area has been repaired in the past, and there is a poorly executed repair at ground level on the north side of the kitchen. General repairs should be allowed for over the coming years.