

# **Dr. Johnson's House: Conducting Visitor Research to Identify and Attract New Audiences**

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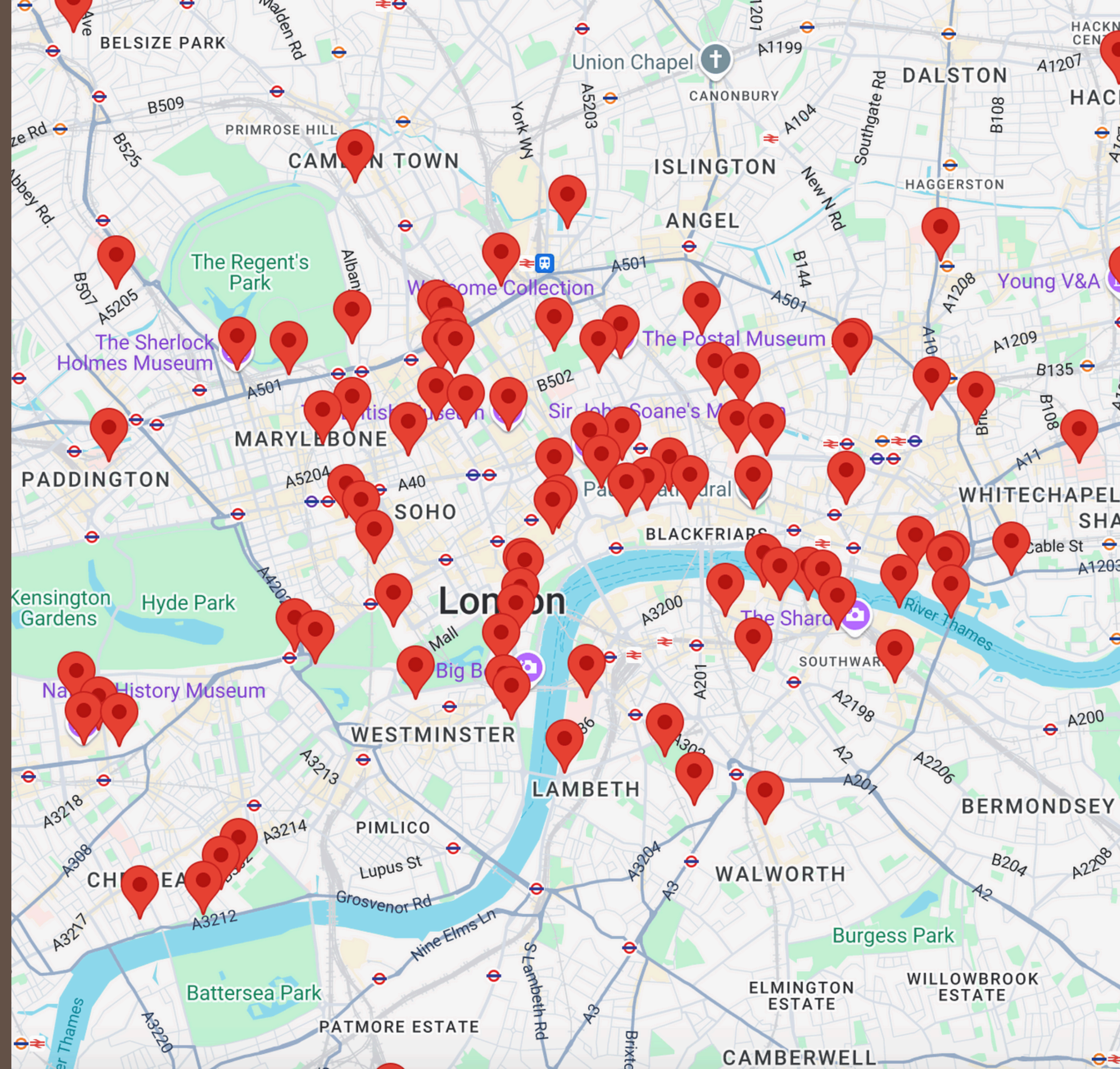


**WPI**

04/03/2025



London is home to  
almost 200 unique  
museums.





Around 60 are  
historic house  
museums.



Dr. Johnson's House  
teaches visitors about  
the life and work of  
Dr. Samuel Johnson.



**17 Gough Square, London**



**Dr. Samuel  
Johnson**



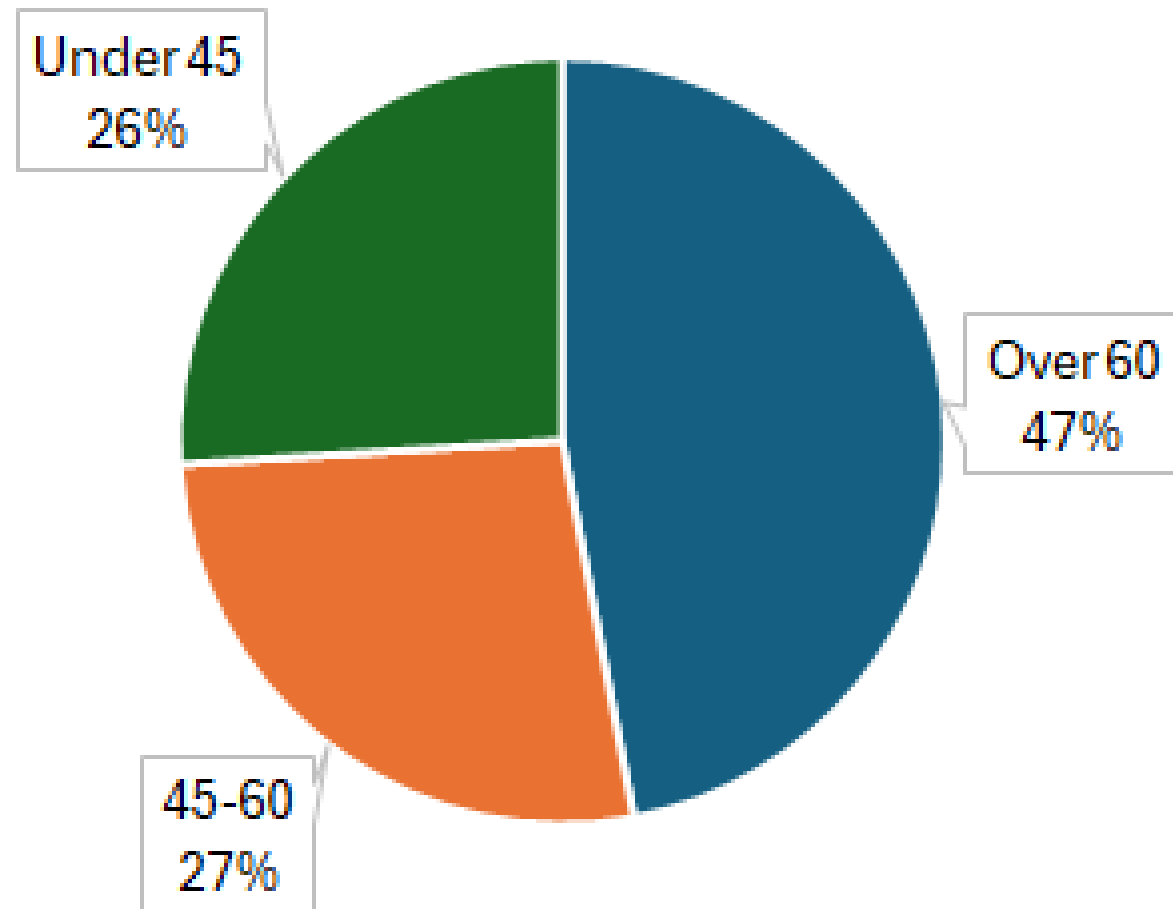
# Exhibits and Events



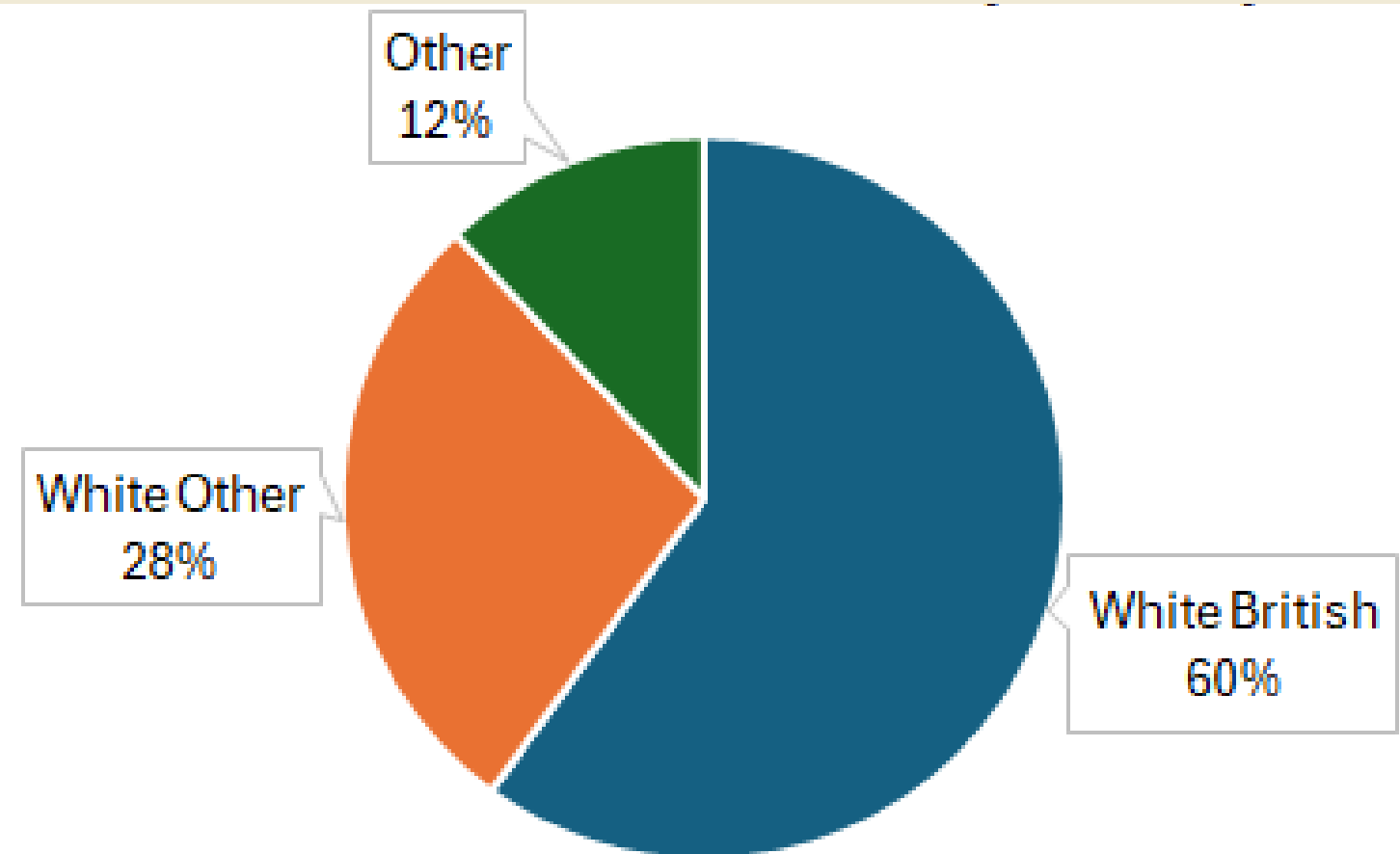


# Dr. Johnson's House attracted a narrow audience.

Almost 75% of visitors were over the age of 45.



Nearly 90% of visitors were white or Caucasian.





# Goal

Our goal was to provide recommendations to Dr. Johnson's House that illustrated potential ways to attract new visitors and diversify their audience.



# Objectives

1

Assessed the current visitor experience at Dr. Johnson's House and pinpointed opportunities for improvement.

2

Examined the offerings of other historic house museums in London to identify initiatives that Dr. Johnson's House could integrate into their offerings.

3

Identified and recommended ways in which Dr. Johnson's House can adapt their in-person and online offerings to attract target audiences.



## **OBJECTIVE 1: THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE**

### **Research Questions:**

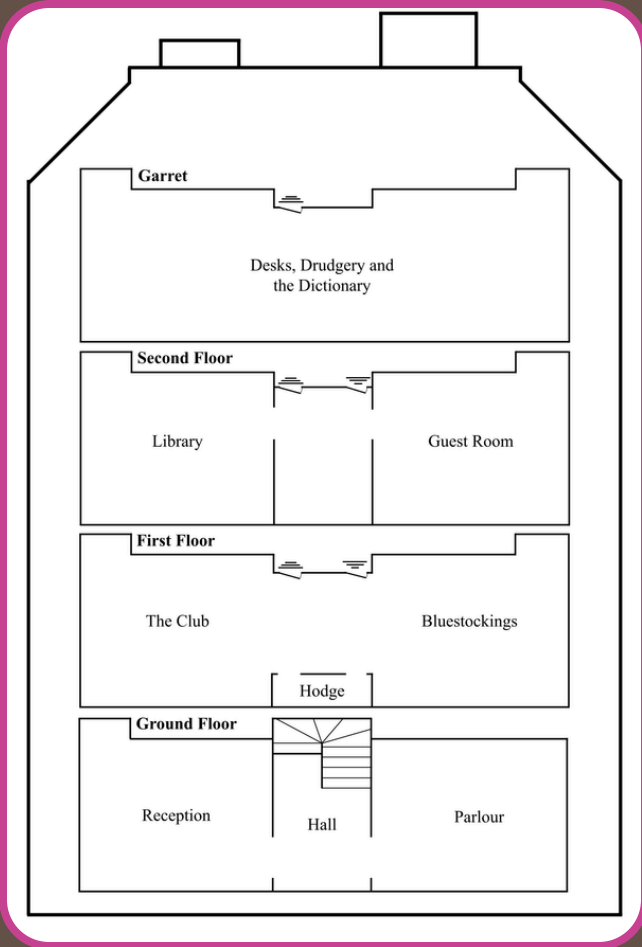
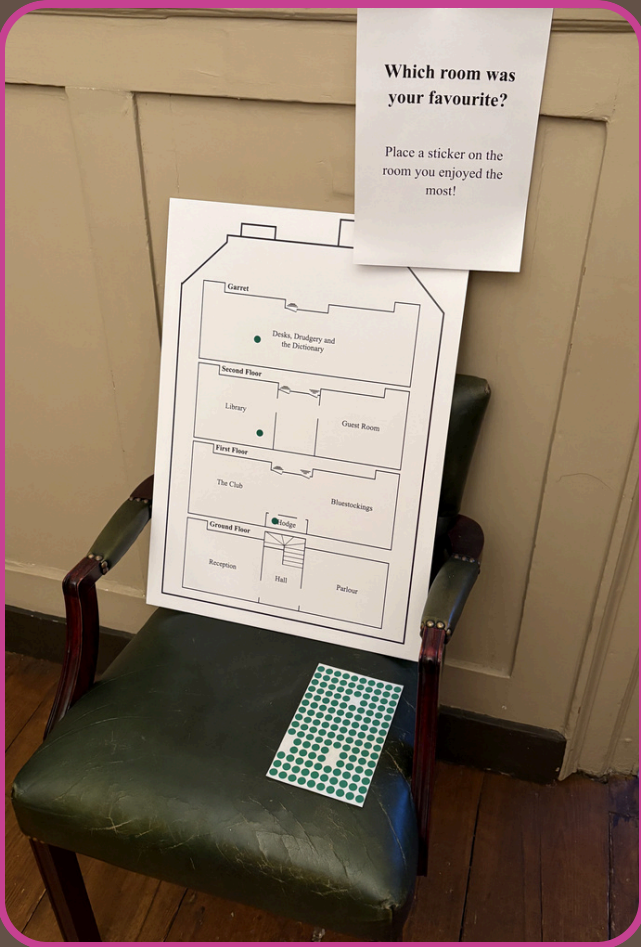
**Who currently visits  
Dr. Johnson's House?**

**What do visitors like or dislike  
about their experience?**

**What could Dr. Johnson's House do  
to improve the visitor experience?**

OBJECTIVE 1:  
THE VISITOR  
EXPERIENCE

Sticker Map

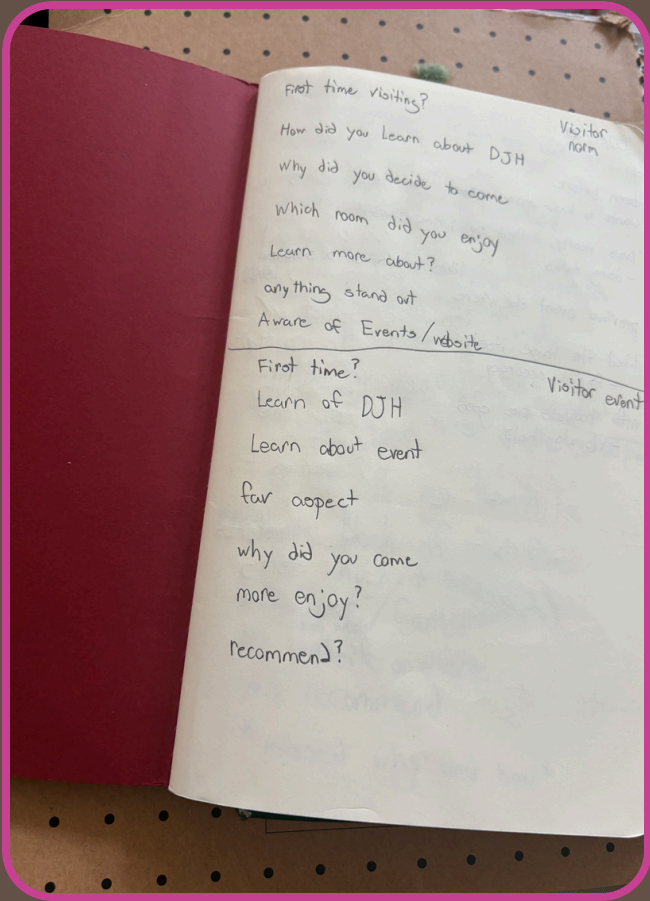


Exit Intercepts

Dr. Johnson's House would like to know more about the audiences visiting the museum. We hope you will answer the following demographic questions. All questions are optional and your responses will be completely anonymous.

What gender do you most closely identify as?  
☐ Male  
☐ Female  
☐ Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ Prefer not to answer

What age group are you in?  
☐ Under 15



Surveys

Thank you for visiting Dr Johnson's House. We are grateful to you for taking part in our survey. We are researchers assisting Dr. Johnson's House with understanding who their audiences are and what they think of their visit. Please take a few moments to complete the following survey about your experience. If you prefer not to respond to some queries, just leave them blank. Your responses will be completely anonymous.

Start Survey

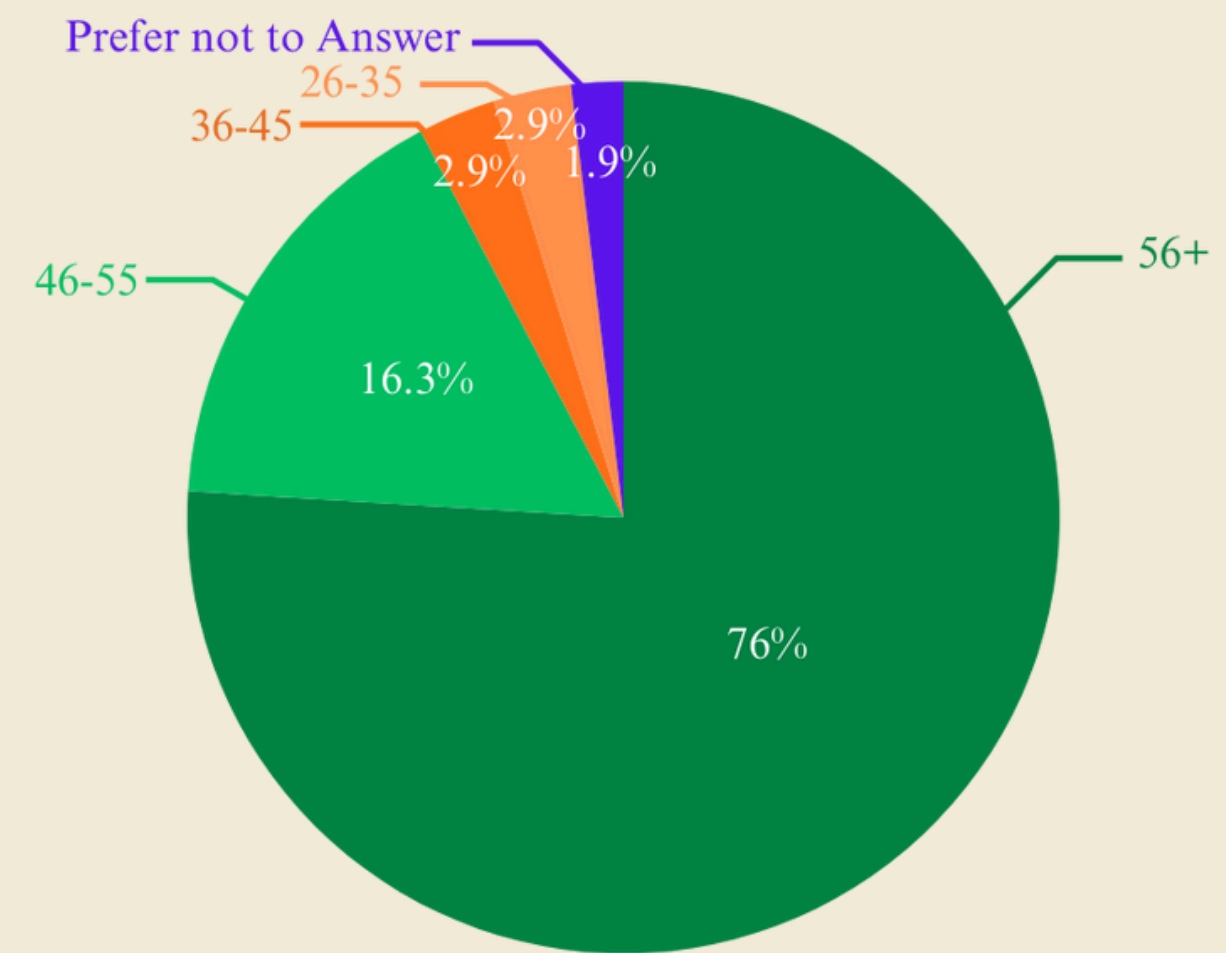
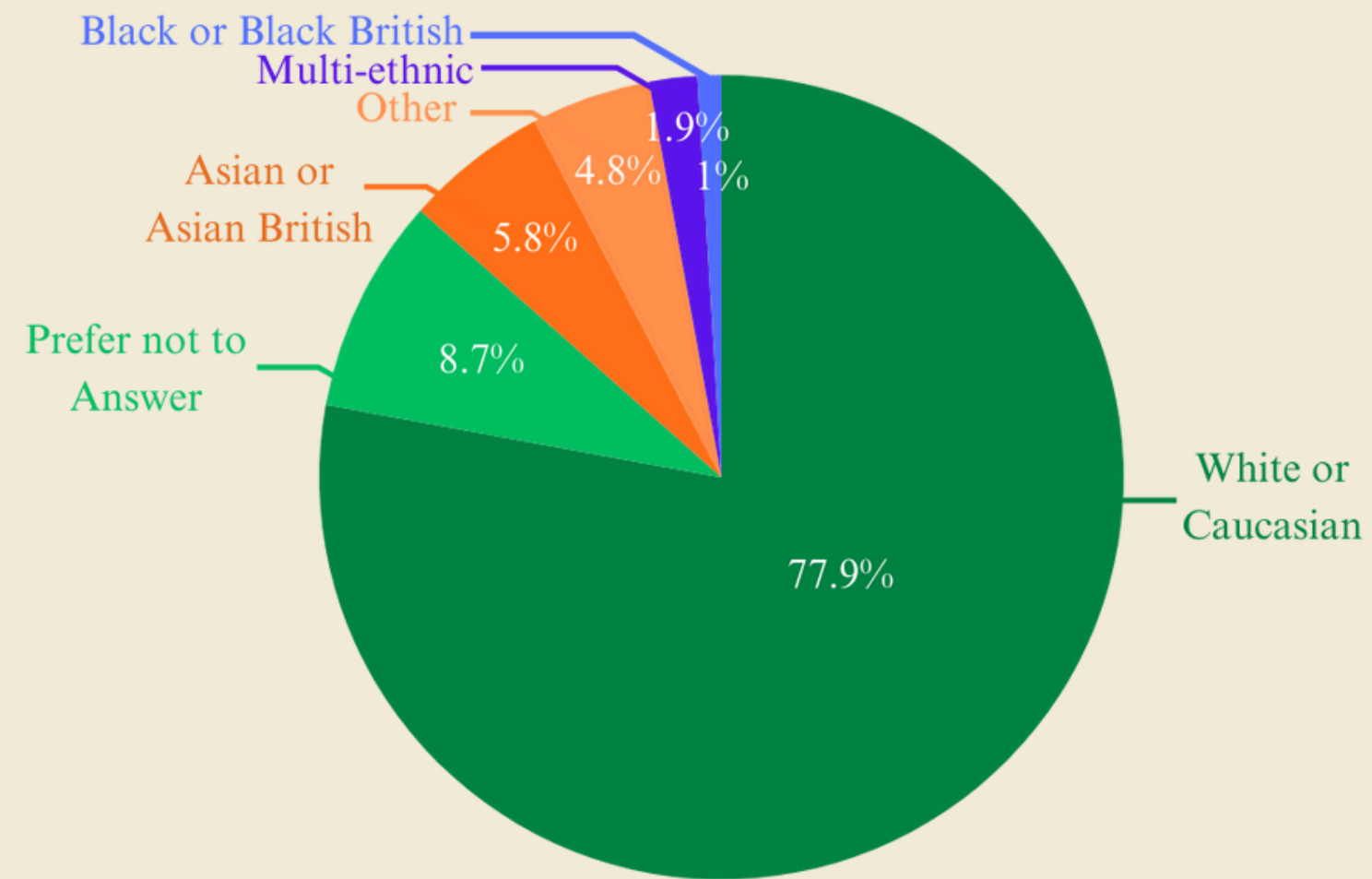
Thank you for your interest in Dr. Johnson's House. We are researchers assisting Dr. Johnson's House with understanding who their audiences are and what they think of their visit. Please take a few moments to complete the following survey about your experience. If you prefer not to respond to some queries, just leave them blank. Your responses will be completely anonymous.

How many times have you visited Dr. Johnson's House in the past six months?  
☐ I have not visited  
☐ I have visited once  
☐ I have visited twice  
☐ I have visited three or more times

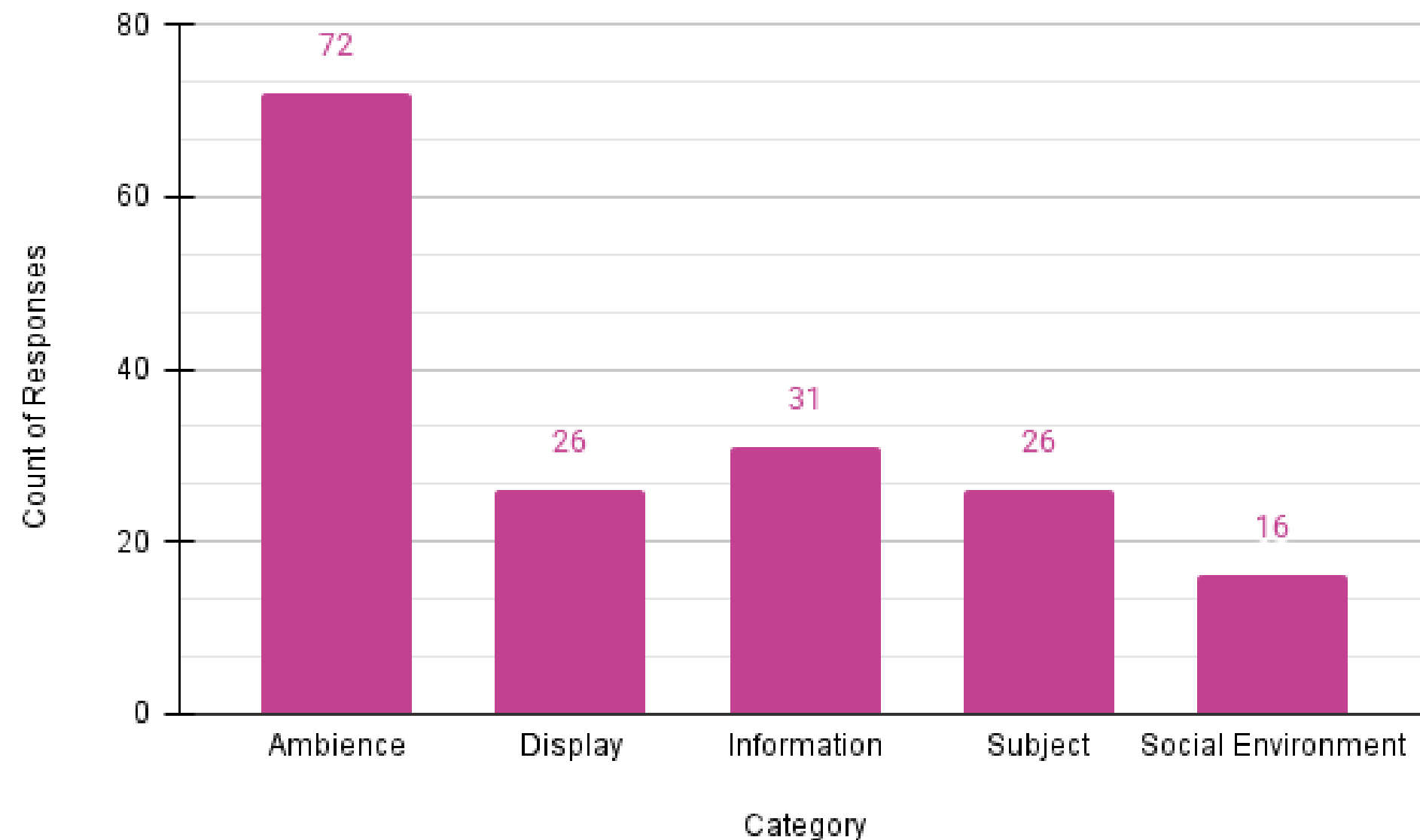
How did you hear about Dr. Johnson's House?  
☐ Personal recommendation  
☐ London Tourism Information  
☐ The Dr. Johnson's House website  
☐ Social Media  
☐ Walked by  
☐ Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_



# Their audience has not seen much change.



# Visitors enjoyed the ambience of the museum.



**"I have pictured Johnson working in this room for so many years so felt like I was walking into a dream"**

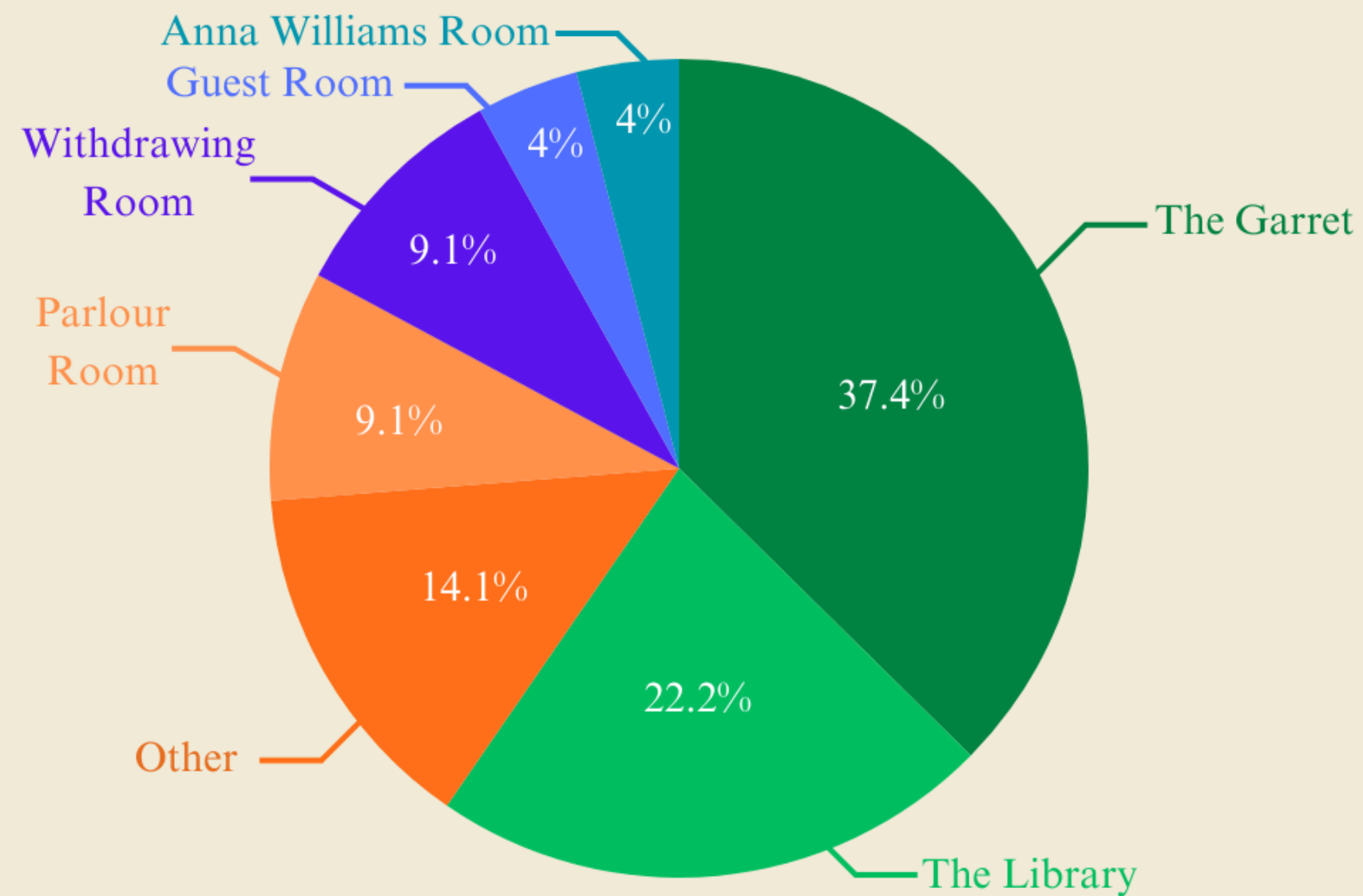
**- Survey Respondent**

**"It still has a 'lived in' quality and not just a museum"**

**- Survey Respondent**



# Visitors liked the Garret and the Library.





# Visitors enjoyed the artefacts and ambience.



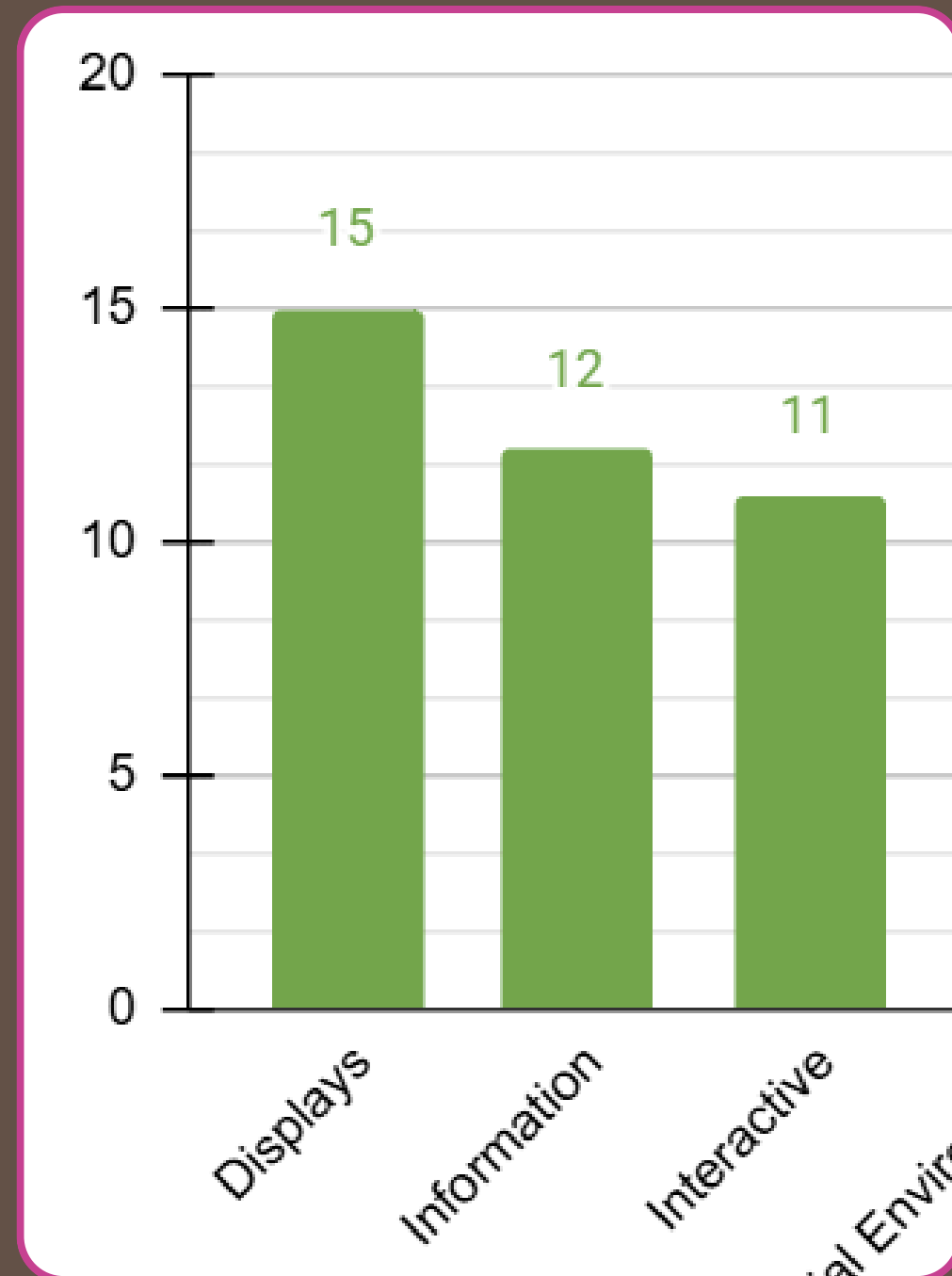
**Garret**



**Library**



# Visitors wanted more information in unique formats.



**“Perhaps additional information throughout the house. Videos, staff in the house in Georgian attire.”**

**- Survey Respondent**

**“Access to more books, newspapers and other printed material from the time that perhaps could be picked up and studied.”**

**- Survey Respondent**

**OBJECTIVE 2:  
OTHER  
HISTORIC  
HOUSE  
MUSEUMS**

**Research Questions:**

**What exhibits and events do other historic house museums offer to visitors?**

**What media formats do other historic house museums use to present information to visitors?**

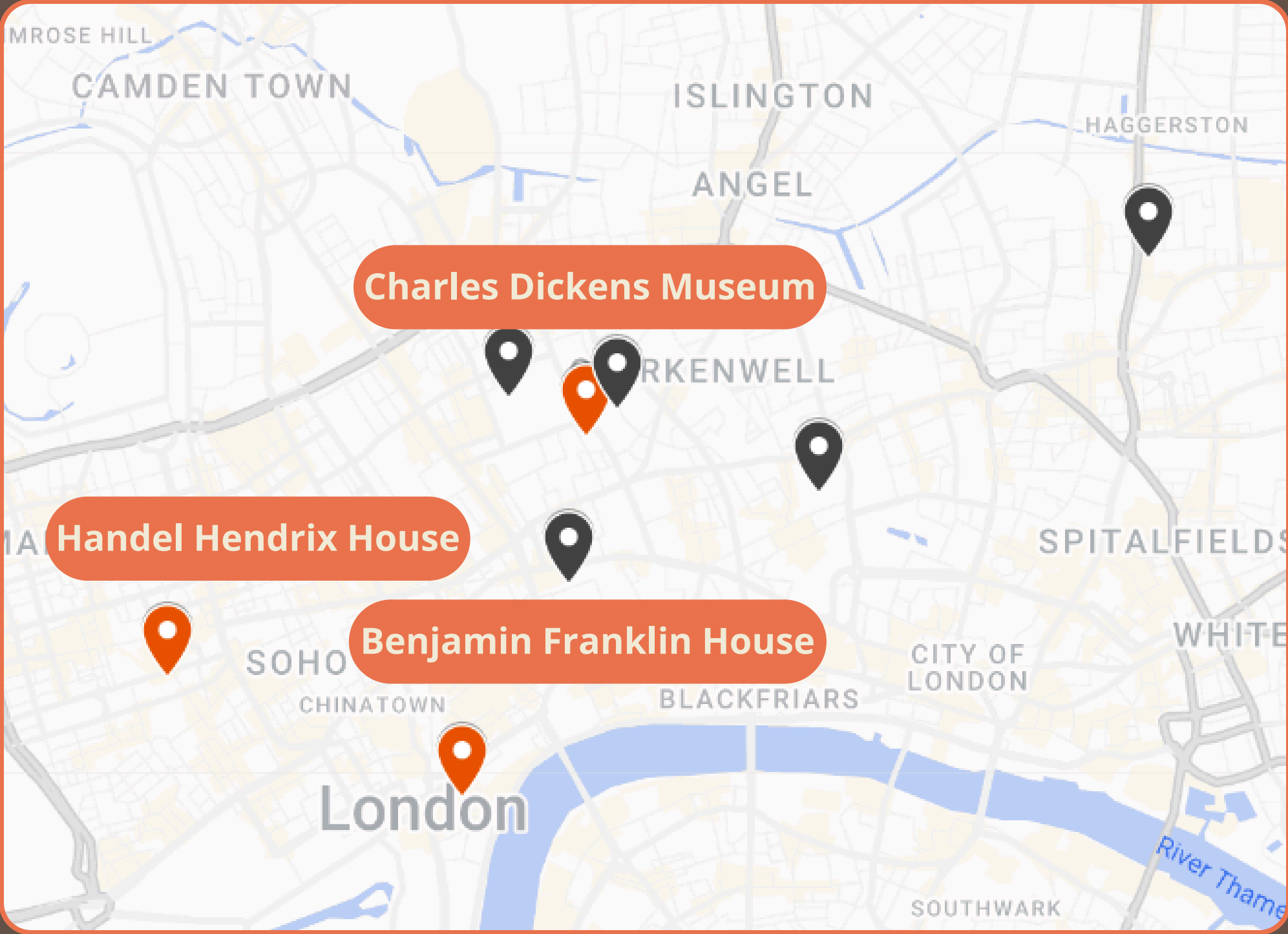


OBJECTIVE 2:  
OTHER  
MUSEUMS

Site Visits



Interviews



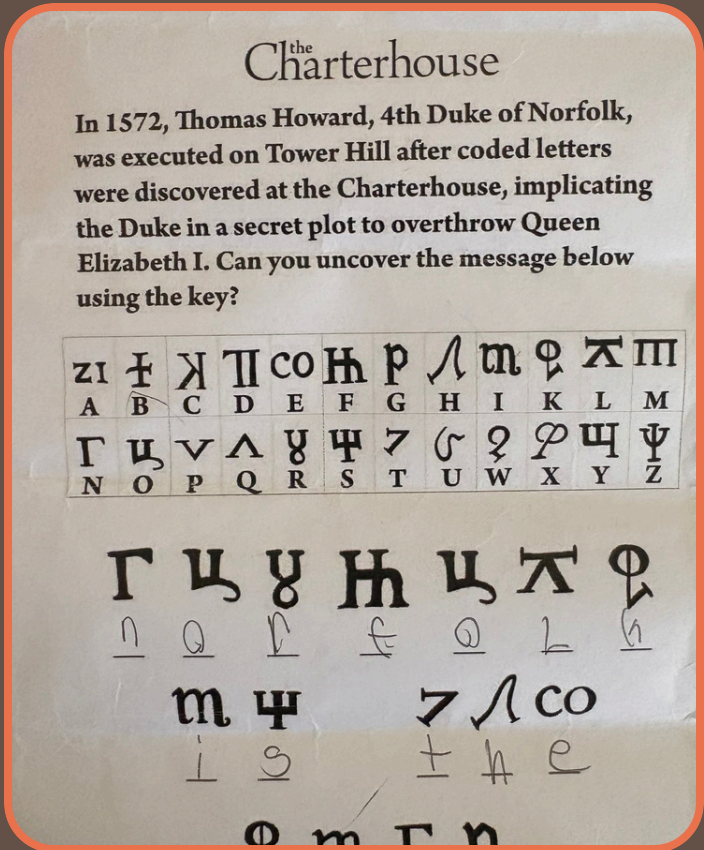


# Museums curate their offerings to target audiences.

Immersive Environment



Targeting Younger Audiences



Interactive Exhibits

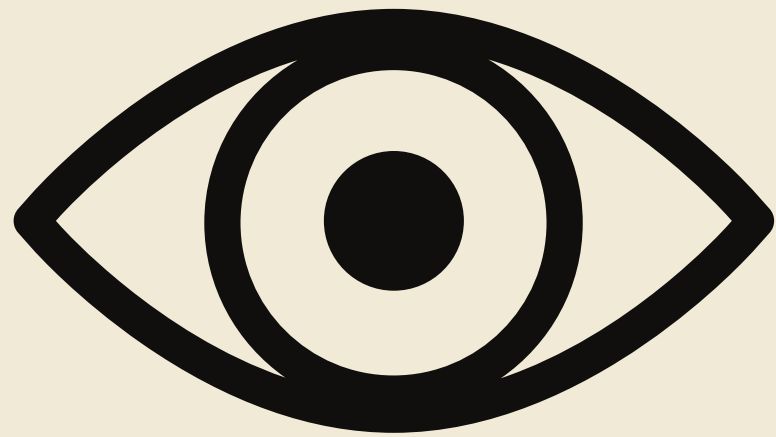


Postal Museum Mail Rail

The Charterhouse Museum

Handel & Hendrix Museum

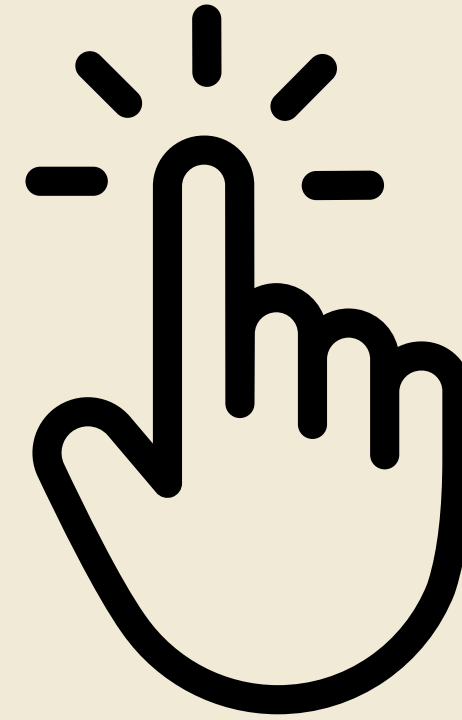
**Museums appeal to various senses in their exhibits.**



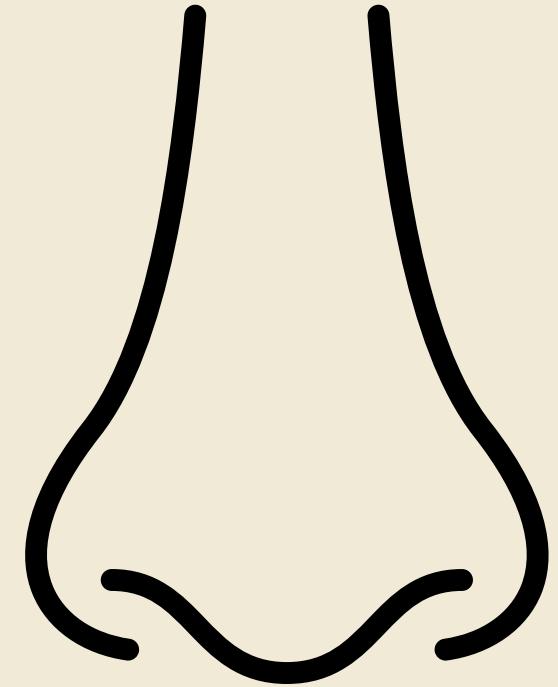
**8/8**



**6/8**



**6/8**



**1/8**



# Museums provide various visitor accommodations.



Interactive Map



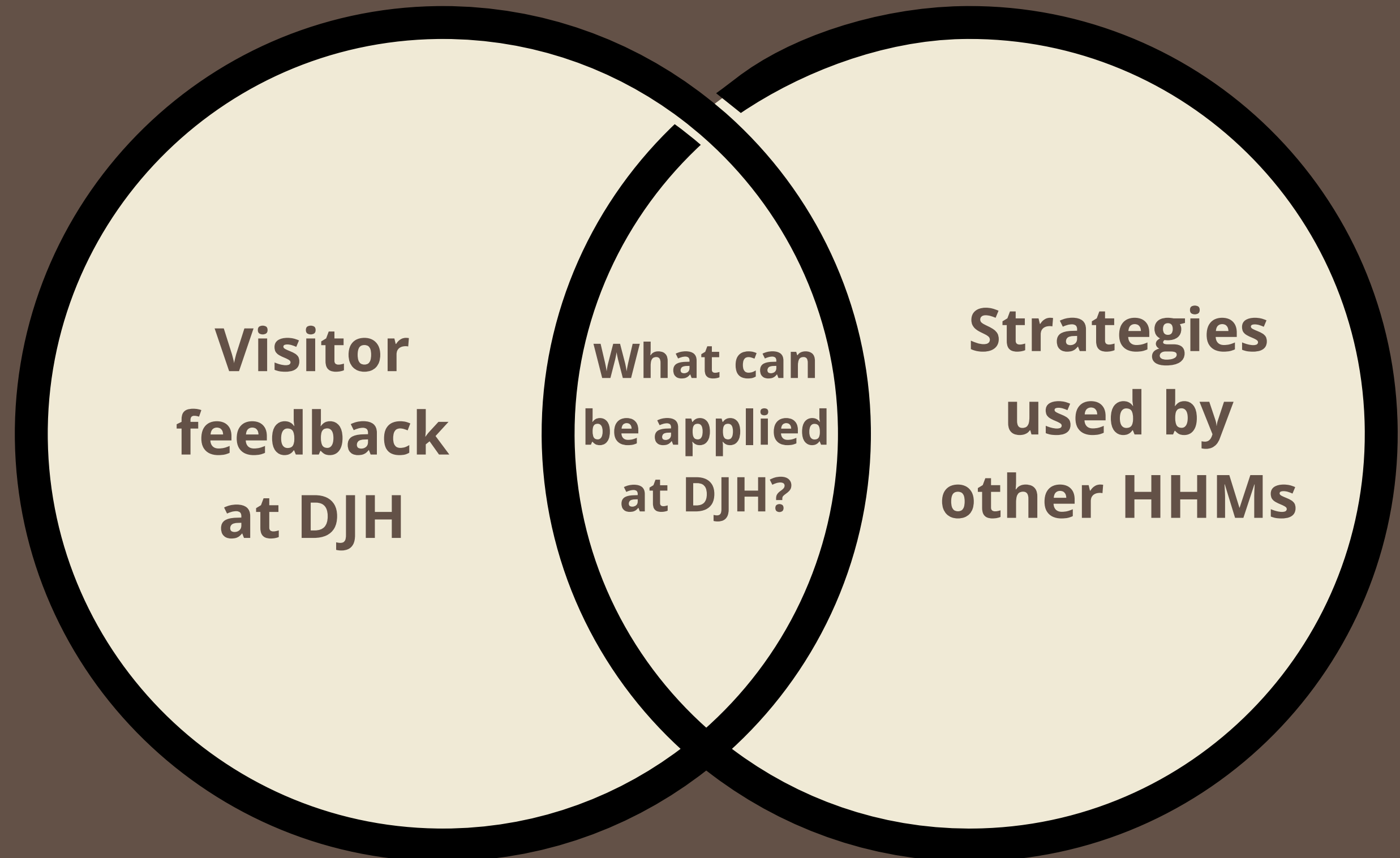
Induction Loops



Alternative Experiences

**OBJECTIVE 3:  
IDENTIFYING  
ACTIONS**

# Literature Review and Integrative Analysis



# Recommendations

**Engagement**

**Immersion**

**Inclusion**



# Engagement Recommendations

## Short Term

Informational  
placards



Call attention to  
room features



## Long Term

Audio Tour





# Immersion Recommendations

## Short Term

Background audio



Interactive activities



## Long Term

18th Century  
Impersonators





# Inclusion Recommendations

## Short Term

Feature more diverse information

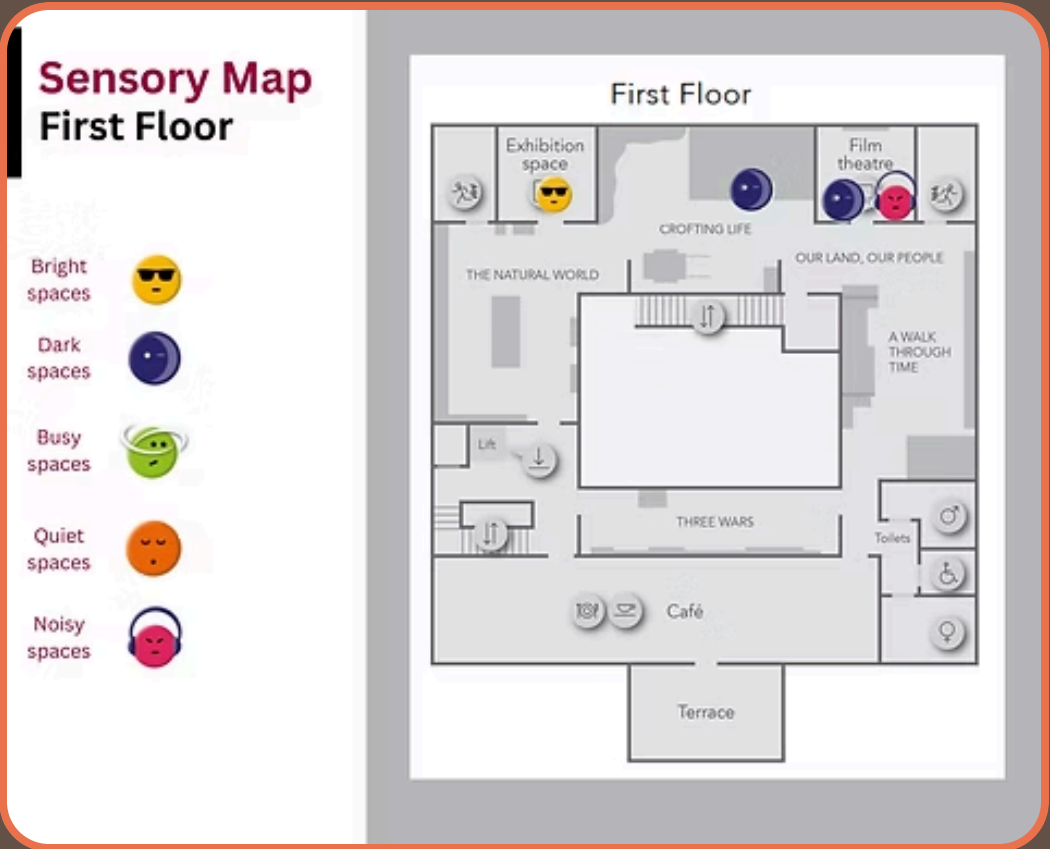


Offer more events related to diversity



## Long Term

Develop an accessibility map





# Acknowledgements



Thank you to the staff of Dr. Johnson's House, especially Celine McDaid, Monica Law, and Alice Rosenbaum. We'd also like to thank the staff we interviewed and everyone else who helped us throughout!





**Thank You!**

**Any questions?**



# References

Slide 1 (museumslondon, 2024)

Slide 2 (Google My Maps, 2025)

Slide 3 (printedpearls, 2024), (Geezer, 2021)

Slide 4 (Dr. Johnson's House, 2025)

Slide 5 (City Bridge Trust, 2023)

Slide 13 (livinglondonhistory, 2023)

Slide 17 (The Postal Museum, 2025)

Slide 19 (Charles Dickens Museum, 2025)

Slide 22 (Dr. Johnson's House, 2025), (National Gallery of Canada, 2025)

Slide 23 (Dr. Johnson's House, 2025), (Blackadder "Ink and Incapability", 1987)

Slide 24 (Dr. Johnson's House, 2025), (Gairloch Museum, 2025)

Slide 25 (Dr. Johnson's House, 2025)

Slide 26 (Dr. Johnson's House, 2025)