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Article

From lived house to personality house museum: A spatial and ınstitutional comparison of Türkiye and the United Kingdom

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ABSTRACT

This article examines personality house museums in Türkiye as spatial and institutional constructs formed through the transformation of lived domestic interiors into curated environments of representation. Positioned at the intersection of architectural history, conservation, and museum studies, the study approaches the house museum as a distinct typology in which space itself functions as a primary medium of narrative production. Focusing on Türkiye while using the United Kingdom as a reference context, it investigates how biographical narratives are shaped through spatial organization, exhibition language, and operational structures. The article employs the DEMHIST classification, particularly the category of the personality house, to establish a comparative analytical framework. Within this framework, Barış Manço House Museum and İsmet İnönü House Museum are examined as two different modes of biographical representation. The Charles Dickens Museum in London is added as a British reference case, offering institutional and archival depth that grounds the UK comparison in concrete terms. The comparison clarifies how governance models, accreditation systems, and funding structures shape conservation, visitor management, and curatorial interpretation. The study argues that house museums should be understood as reconstructed interiors in which authenticity, memory, and representation are produced through selective spatial and curatorial decisions. In doing so, it contributes to the Turkish literature by strengthening the architectural and spatial dimension of house museum analysis and by making visible the institutional conditions that shape their formation and sustainability.

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INTRODUCTION, METHOD, AND COMPARATIVE APPROACH

House museums form a distinct spatial category between the domestic space and the public museum, linking architectural history, conservation theory, and museum studies. Unlike museums built for exhibition from the outset, they emerge when a once-inhabited interior is incorporated into public display, interpretive narrative, and institutional structure — a layered transformation in which the domestic space is read, arranged, and reconstructed through specific representational strategies (Günhan, 2011; Uz, 2010). Traces assumed to have been preserved are often reordered through curatorial and managerial decisions, so the past is

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structured within a representational order shaped for public narration. House museums therefore need to be examined through both the representational capacity of architectural space and the mechanisms that activate it.

International scholarship links the conversion of the house into a museum to spatial arrangement, exhibition language, and institutional frameworks (Pavoni, 2001). Decisions about which rooms are preserved and opened, which objects are displayed, and which are withheld establish a representational order that fixes the past to a particular moment; this order is often justified through claims of authenticity, yet authenticity is frequently produced through selection and reconstruction (Nora, 1989; Lowenthal, 1998). House museums retain value as documents of domestic typologies and interior culture, while musealization reshapes that documentary quality and produces a new narrative framework (Bakır, 2023; Özdirir, 2022).

In Türkiye, house museums remain a relatively new and fragmented field, with much existing work focused on individual cases (Uz, 2010; Aslan, 2019). This article outlines the general condition of house museums in Türkiye, examines the selected examples' transformation through spatial organization, curation, and operation in relation to the tension between house and museum, and proposes an analytical framework that may help address a gap in the Turkish literature. The study focuses on "personality houses" within the DEMHIST classification[1] developed by the ICOM International Committee for Historic House Museums. Such museums' main concern is how biographical narrative is constructed through spatial arrangement and exhibition language.

The United Kingdom serves as a comparative reference context: the earlier institutionalization of its house museum tradition offers a basis for clarifying the operating conditions and limitations of Turkish examples, and the Charles Dickens Museum grounds this comparison in concrete curatorial and spatial terms. DEMHIST offers a classificatory logic beyond the label of "historic house," making it possible to discuss examples from different national contexts through a shared conceptual language (ICOM, 2001). The case readings examine spatial organization, curatorial decisions, and operational structures together, asking how institutional affiliation and management converge with exhibition language, and how this becomes visible in the domestic interior through room hierarchy, circulation, thresholds, and display elements.

The main research problem concerns how house museums in different national contexts construct architectural space as an instrument of representation, and through which institutional and spatial mechanisms this process operates. The study addresses three questions: How is domestic circulation transformed into a museum route? Which rooms and thresholds become focal points of biographical representation? How do governance and access conditions affect the spatial and curatorial organization of the house? Each case is examined through a common set of criteria — original domestic organization, current spatial use, room hierarchy, thresholds, visual axes, visitor circulation, exhibition interventions, access restrictions, and institutional governance — first identifying former domestic functions, then examining how these were retained, altered, or replaced during musealization.

THE CONCEPT OF THE HOUSE MUSEUM AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A house museum emerges when a former residence associated with a person, family, way of life, or historical event is preserved and opened to visitors. The building no longer functions as a neutral container for objects; through its layout, room hierarchy, circulation, and traces of everyday use, it becomes a direct carrier of exhibition meaning (Butcher-Younghans, 1993; Pavoni, 2001). Narrative is embedded in the space itself: interior atmosphere, object arrangement, and the proximity created by domestic scale become key elements of visitor experience (Günhan, 2011).

House museums do not preserve the past unchanged; they construct it through selection. Collective memory is socially produced, and arrangements in house museums are likewise shaped by social and cultural frameworks (Halbwachs, 1992). The house museum turns an individual life story or family history into an object of cultural memory through public visitation and interpretation; the reconstruction of domestic order, the emphasis on particular rooms, and the concealment of selected traces produce a representational economy based on selective remembrance (Assmann, 2011).

A museum does more than display objects: it establishes relations between them and directs visitors toward a particular reading, and in house museums this narrative production works through the interaction of text, object, and space (Hooper-Greenhill, 2000). These narratives are constructed rather than neutral, since new circulation routes, safety requirements, and exhibition practices reorganize the interior (Bennett, 1995); the house museum thus retains documentary value while producing a new narrative framework (Günhan, 2011).

Authenticity depends on the preservation of original objects, but also on which historical moment is chosen as a reference point and how that moment is fixed in space (Nora, 1989). House museums rarely show the full flow of life; usually one period is selected and the interior orga-

[1] Categorisation Project - ICOM DEMHIST

nized around it, which may push the house's transformations and internal tensions into the background (Özdirir, 2022). Authenticity should therefore be understood as a representational strategy, shaped directly by restoration decisions, display design, lighting, signage, and visitor routes.

Typology debates within ICOM seek a common basis for examples appearing under different names in different national contexts. Pavoni's typology shows how house museums diverge between the "historic house" and the "museum house," through association with a person, the building's architectural value, or the way of life it represents (Pavoni, 2001); Pinna similarly argues that house museums are a museological field shaping visitor experience as well as a preservation practice (Pinna, 2001). In Türkiye, the concept of the house museum is produced through different institutions and scales, while the typology itself often remains unclear (Uz, 2010).

DEMHIST is used here to reduce this conceptual fragmentation. Rather than limiting house museums to the label of "historic house," it offers a classificatory logic based on the represented person or way of life, institutional structure, and preservation practices; since house museums can be distinguished by narrative focus, DEMHIST's categories (Table 1) serve as a practical tool for making those differences visible.

In sum, house museums matter for architectural history because of their close relation to domestic space: memory and authenticity are produced through spatial organization and curatorial decisions, and representation emerges through the interaction of text, object, and space (Hooper-Greenhill, 2000; Nora, 1989). ICOM's typology debates and the DEMHIST classification provide the analytical basis used here to classify and compare these structures across contexts.

HOUSE MUSEUMS IN TÜRKİYE AND ISTANBUL: GENERAL TENDENCIES AND SELECTED EXAMPLES

A singular, standardized house museum system cannot readily be identified in Türkiye. House museums emerge within broader museology and heritage management practices and are shaped by the operating logics of different institutions, so definitions, operational standards, funding, and supervision vary across cases (Uz, 2015). Even within the same city, municipal management, foundation or association administration, ministry-related structures, and private ownership produce differences in exhibition language, display practices, and maintenance rhythms (Günhan, 2011; Özdirir, 2022). House museums in Türkiye should therefore be understood as a spatial type in which the balance between preservation and public access is shaped case by case through ownership, governance, funding, and representation.

Turkish museums operate through a multilayered system: state museums affiliated with the Ministry of Culture and Tourism exist alongside private museums operating under the Ministry's permission and supervision. Under Law No. 2863 and related legislation, Ministry-affiliated museums are governed centrally, while private museums remain subject to ministerial approval for establishment, oversight, and inspection. Museums housed in historic buildings add a further layer of complexity, as decisions must also account for conservation provisions and regional conservation board rulings. A house museum's institutional structure therefore cannot be explained through formal affiliation alone; ownership, operating body, the relationship with the Ministry, and conservation obligations must all be considered together (Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 1990, 2005; Law on the Protection of Cultural and Natural Assets, 1983).

To understand the general condition of house museums in Türkiye, an inventory was compiled and mapped. As no sin-

Table 1. DEMHIST Categorization of House Museums, (DEMHIST, n.d.)

DEMHIST Category	Description
Personality houses	Writers, artists, musicians, politicians, military heroes, etc.
Collection houses	The former home of a collector or a house now used to display a collection.
Houses of beauty	Houses valued primarily as works of art.
Historic event houses	Houses commemorating an event associated with the house.
Local society houses	House museums established by a local community, usually as a social and cultural facility reflecting local identity rather than for a historic reason.
Ancestral homes	Country houses and small castles open to the public.
Power houses	Palaces and large castles open to the public.
Clergy houses	Monasteries, abbots' houses, and other ecclesiastical buildings with former or current residential use, open to the public.
Humble homes	Vernacular buildings such as modest farms, valued as reflections of a lost way of life and/or building tradition.

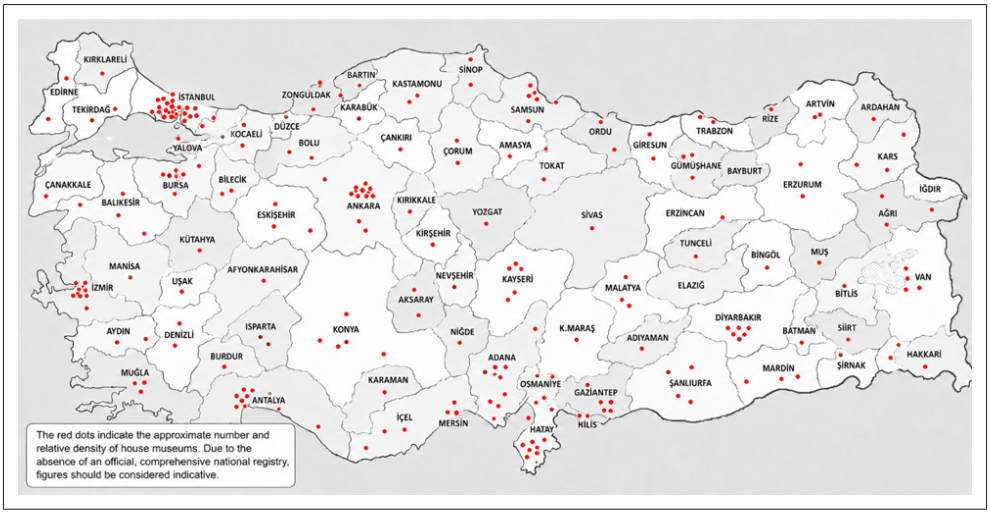

Figure 1. Distribution of identified house museums across Türkiye (prepared by the author, 2026, based on Uz, 2010 and the museum inventories of the Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Culture and Tourism). Each point indicates the approximate number and density of identified house museums, as no official national source provides an exact count.

gle national database exists for this purpose, the inventory was built by cross-checking the literature with official museum lists from the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (Uz, 2010; Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Culture and Tourism, n.d.-a, n.d.-b), and the identified examples were mapped by the author according to location.

The map shows that most house museums in Türkiye are located in Istanbul, likely reflecting the city's central role in cultural production and intellectual life since the late Ottoman and early Republican periods, alongside stronger local governance, foundation networks, and tourism demand (Figure 1). Istanbul stands out not only in number but as a setting where different combinations of ownership, governance, funding, and representation become visible; house museums cluster along particular routes, with thematic diversity higher in some districts than others. The inventory table (Table 2), presenting theme, management type, and brief notes together, clarifies the multi-actor framework within which the selected examples are situated.

The empirical corpus consists of two formally operating personality house museums, Barış Manço House Museum and İnönü House Museum, selected through purposive sampling from Table 2 because they belong to the same DEMHIST category while representing contrasting biographical fields and governance models: popular culture under municipal administration, and political history under foundation administration. Both retain the legibility of their former domestic organization and are regularly accessible, allowing the study to examine how represented identity and institutional structure jointly shape room hierarchy, circulation, exhibition language, and public access.

This institutional contrast also shapes the depth of material available: the two museums offer a comparable density of well-documented sources — photographic records, institutional statements, and press coverage — that several other examples in Table 2 lack. This documentary richness, together with their contrasting governance structures, makes a sustained comparative reading of curatorial decisions, access conditions, and archival depth possible across the two cases.

BARIŞ MANÇO HOUSE MUSEUM

Barış Manço, one of the most widely recognized figures in Turkish popular music and television culture, is regarded as one of the founding names of Anatolian rock. As a musician, composer, lyricist, and television presenter, he reached different generations and secured a lasting place in collective memory, especially through his TV program *7'den 77'ye*[2]. He may therefore be considered one of the most visible cultural figures in the history of popular culture in Türkiye (Kadıköy Municipality, n.d.).

Barış Manço House Museum was created when Manço's house in Moda (Figure 2) was opened to visitors by Kadıköy Municipality as a museum. Institutional narratives emphasize the contribution of the Manço family and the support of Halkbank, pointing to a model shaped by municipal initiative together with family and corporate support (Anadolu Ajansı, 2022). Originally built in the nineteenth century by the Whittall family, prominent Levantine residents of

[2] Barış Manço's television program 7'den 77'ye ("From 7 to 77"), broadcast in Türkiye between 1988 and 1998, was a highly popular cultural and educational program addressing audiences of all ages. The title became closely associated with Manço's public persona and his broad intergenerational appeal. (Kadıköy Municipality Barış Manço House, 2020)

Moda, the house was purchased by Manço from the family's last remaining members in 1984 for its Victorian character (ARTtv, 2020). The transformation from private residence to public museum did not require major structural intervention: the house retains its original massing and room configuration, though individual rooms were reassigned new functions — the room once used to serve meals from the dining room, for instance, was later redesigned as a costume display room (ARTtv, 2020).

As a personality house devoted to a popular cultural figure, the museum builds its biographical narrative through objects and interior atmosphere. Its municipal framework shapes public access, while maintenance and updating depend on the continuity of local administrative capacity and institutional support.

Table 2. Selected personality house museums in Istanbul (prepared by the author, 2026)

Museum Name	Year of Construction	Year the Person Began Living There	Year Opened to Visitors	Associated Figure (significance)	Governing Institution	Neighbourhood / District	Open to Visitors	Source(s)
Istanbul Atatürk Museum	1910	1918	1942	Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (Founder and the first President of the Turkish Republic)	Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality	Şişli (Halaskargazi Avenue)	Yes	İlgürel, M. (2021), Şişli Atatürk Evi, Atatürk Ansiklopedisi
Aşiyan Museum (Tevfik Fikret House)	1906	1906	1945	Tevfik Fikret (poet)	Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality	Beşiktaş (Aşiyan)	Yes	Demirgüç (2023); Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality (n.d.)
Adam Mickiewicz Museum	1870 (rebuilt)	1855	1955	Adam Mickiewicz (Polish poet)	Ministry of Culture and Tourism	Beyoğlu (Bostan Mahallesi)	Yes	Bektaş & Yalçınkaya (2020)
Sait Faik Abasıyanık Museum	19th century	1938	1959-2013 (Reopened)	Sait Faik Abasıyanık (writer)	Darüşşafaka Society	Adalar (Burgazada)	Yes	Aslan (2019); Darüşşafaka Society (n.d.)
Kazım Karabekir Paşa Museum	Late 19th century	1930	2005	Kazım Karabekir Paşa (commander in the War of Independence)	Kazım Karabekir Foundation	Kadıköy (Erenköy)	Yes	Özdökmeciler (2020); Kâzım Karabekir Foundation (n.d.); Anadolu Agency (2011)
Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar Museum	1911	1912	2000	Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar (writer)	Ministry of Culture and Tourism	Adalar (Heybeliada)	No	Çalışlar (2022); Adalar District Governorship (n.d.)
Barış Manço House Museum	1895–1900	1984	2010	Barış Manço (musician)	Kadıköy Municipality	Kadıköy (Moda)	Yes	Kadıköy Municipality (n.d.)
İnönü House Museum	1920	1924	1994	İsmet İnönü (Former President of the Turkish Republic)	İnönü Foundation	Adalar (Heybeliada)	Yes	İnönü Foundation (n.d.); Erkurt (2025)
Aziz Nesin Museum	1974	1981	1995	Aziz Nesin (writer and humorist)	Nesin Foundation	Çatalca (Gökçeali)	Yes	Nesin Foundation (n.d.); Cumhuriyet (1995)

Figure 2. Barış Manço House Museum: Exterior façade, Moda/Kadıköy. (Kadıköy Municipality Barış Manço House, 2020).

In the basement, the summer garden displays Manço's instruments, stage equipment, and concert memorabilia together, so that guitars, drums, and concert posters gain representational value through their selective placement within a biographical sequence (Anadolu Ajansı, 2022) (Figure 3).

The authenticity claimed by the museum is not tied to a single date but to the cumulative period of Manço's career, from his years as a performer to his death in 1999. Only objects directly linked to his own use — guitars, records, stage costumes, personal jewelry — carry the claim to originality (Anadolu Ajansı, 2022); didactic panels and thematic groupings, by contrast, are curatorial additions rather than inherited fragments of domestic life. This corresponds to what Lowenthal (1998) and Nora (1989) describe as the constructed nature of authenticity in memorial settings: the objects are original, yet their meaning is produced through their sequencing within the museum's narrative. A hierarchy emerges in which the basement summer garden functions as the primary node, anchoring the visitor's understanding of Manço as a musician, while the living room and main bedroom on the upper floors operate as secondary, background settings that humanise this public identity. Circulation reinforces this hierarchy: visitors move from the performance-oriented summer garden toward the more intimate domestic spaces above, staging the transition from

Figure 3. Summer garden, instrument display, basement. Photograph by the author, 2026.

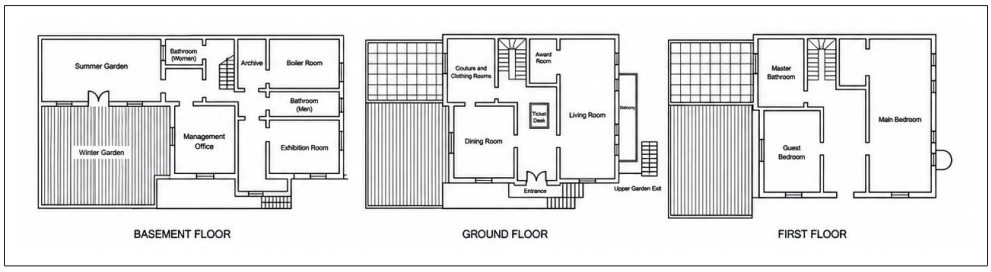

Figure 4. Basement, ground floor, and first floor plans of the Barış Manço House Museum, drawn to approximate proportions by the author (not to precise scale), 2026.

Manço's public persona to his private life. This hierarchy is legible in the combined floor plans (Figure 4), where the basement summer garden occupies the primary position along the visitor route and living Room and main bedroom on the upper floors appear as sequential, lower-emphasis stops.

The museum largely preserves the original domestic layout while reinterpreting selected rooms through thematic display: bedrooms remain legible as domestic interiors, yet are incorporated into the narrative through showcases and selected object groups. A small award room, accessed through the living room, displays Manço's prizes and honours alongside travel photographs, passports, and handwritten materials (Figure 5), making his identity as a musician, television figure, and public personality visible to visitors as they move through the house. This continuity between domestic and exhibition space means visitors experience the museum less as a conventional gallery sequence and more as an extension of lived domestic space, an effect reinforced by the retention of original room proportions and window placements, as in the main bedroom, where museum display sits directly alongside the room's original architecture (Figure 6).

İSMET İNÖNÜ HOUSE MUSEUM

İsmet İnönü was a leading figure of the Turkish War of Independence and the second President of the Republic, while his son Erdal İnönü sustained the family's public visibility in the next generation as an academic and a politician. İnönü House Museum in Heybeliada, formerly known as the Mavromatis Köşkü, was used as the family's summer house (Kaya, 2021) (Figure 7).

The site predates the İnönü family's residence: an earlier wooden mansion on the plot was destroyed in the 1894 earthquake, after which the current masonry structure was built in 1920 in a Neo-Classical style, on a basement, ground floor, two upper floors, and an attic (Kaya, 2021). The İnönü family rented the property in 1924 and purchased it in 1934. After İsmet İnönü's death in 1973, the house passed to the İnönü Foundation, underwent renovation in 1989–1990, and was later opened as a museum (Erkurt, 2025). The transition to museum use preserved the building's original room layout and proportions, with conversion limited mainly to interpretive material and controlled visiting arrangements rather than structural alteration (İnönü Foundation, n.d.).

As a personality house associated with a political figure, the İnönü House Museum connects his biography closely to

Figure 5. Award room displaying Manço's prizes and honours. Photograph by the author, 2026.

Figure 6. Main Bedroom interior alongside museum display. Photograph by the author, 2026.

Figure 7. İnönü House Museum: Exterior façade (İnönü Foundation, n.d.).

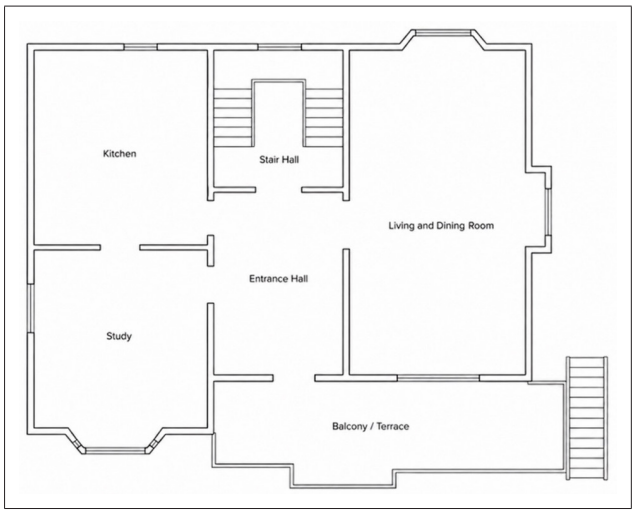

Figure 8. İnönü House Museum, ground floor plan, drawn to approximate proportions by the author (not to precise scale), 2026.

public history. The ground floor concentrates the semi-public register of the visit: living and dining room, kitchen, and İsmet İnönü's study open directly off the entrance, and nearly all furniture and objects in these rooms are original, with only a small number of pieces reupholstered. The stairwell walls extend this register vertically, displaying correspondence, family photographs, and paintings. This spatial organization is legible in the ground floor plan (Figure 8), where the study and the entrance sequence are marked as the primary route for visitors.

The first floor shifts toward the private and familial: it holds the bedroom of İsmet and Mevhibe İnönü and, separately, that of their sons, alongside a bathroom fitted with a bell-pull device installed in İnönü's later years for medical reasons (Figure 9). Here, authenticity is constructed less through iconic performance objects than through the material traces

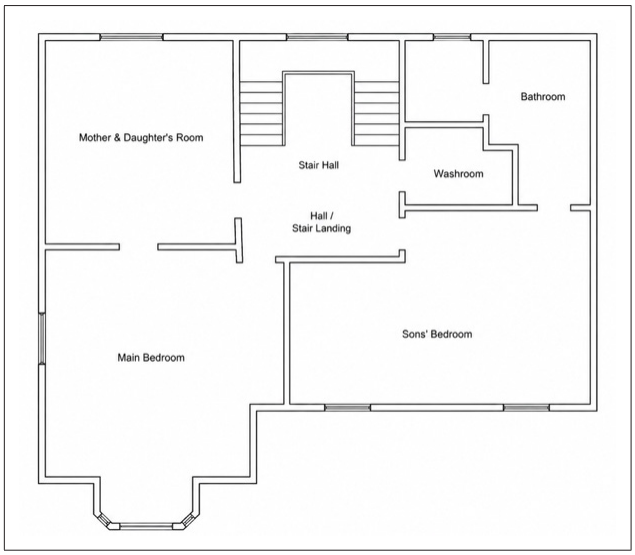

Figure 9. İnönü House Museum, first floor plan, drawn to approximate proportions by the author (not to precise scale), 2026.

of routine political labour: the desk, papers, and correspondence in the study are presented as evidence of continuous statesmanship rather than as isolated relics, aligning with Nora's (1989) argument that memory sites derive authority from implied continuity rather than singular events. The room hierarchy privileges the study and the balcony-adjacent sitting area as primary nodes, where political and familial narratives intersect, while the upstairs bedrooms recede into a supporting role — a distinction echoing how architectural representation in house museums organizes narrative through spatial hierarchy (Günhan, 2011).

The threshold between the ground floor's semi-public rooms and the first floor's private quarters is not merely spatial but symbolic, marking the boundary between İnönü's public political identity and his private family life. Original furniture placement and room proportions are retained throughout, so that museum display sits directly within the domestic setting rather than replacing it (Figure 10), a pattern also observed more broadly across house museums in Türkiye (Uz, 2015).

HOUSE MUSEUMS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND PRACTICES

In the United Kingdom, house museums developed within institutional frameworks connecting the preservation of historic buildings with public access. These frameworks involve a range of charitable and statutory actors, among which the National Trust has played a prominent role. Established as a charity for the protection of "Places of Historic Interest or Natural Beauty" and supported by parliamentary authority through the National Trust Acts (1907–1971) and related legislation, it created a structure combining conservation and

Figure 10. Living and dining room, ground floor. Photograph by the author, 2026.

management (National Trust, 2024). Historic houses could thus be handled as properties where maintenance, access, and representation were managed together, with collection care, risk management, and visitor control becoming established parts of house museum practice.

Where ownership remains in state hands, a different model has operated since the 2015 division of English Heritage. On 1 April 2015, English Heritage split into two bodies: the new charity English Heritage, responsible for operating and presenting the state-owned National Heritage Collection, and Historic England, responsible for statutory and advisory functions (English Heritage, 2015). This keeps ownership public while assigning management to a charity with stronger capacity for presentation and revenue generation, making access, maintenance, and public representation more institutionally traceable.

The British model operates through a multi-channel funding structure rather than ticket income alone. The National Trust's 2023–2024 annual report, for example, records income from membership, donations and legacies, property-based commercial activity, and investments, showing how conservation and operation are funded together (National Trust, 2024). Large heritage institutions nevertheless remain vulnerable to financial pressure, which may lead to restructuring, staff reductions, and restricted access at some sites; the institutional framework does not remove this tension, but provides tools for managing it.

In exhibition and curatorial practice, interpretation design is treated as a core part of the house museum's representational structure. Narrative is shaped through object selection, decisions about which rooms are opened, how thresholds are marked, how routes are designed, and how visitor flow is controlled (Bennett, 1995; Hooper-Greenhill, 2000), including fixing the house to a particular historical moment through period-room logic and distinguishing public rooms from back-of-house areas such as storage and archives. The house museum thus works as both a spatial document carrying material traces and a planned representational order (Pavoni, 2001; Pinna, 2001).

One institutional basis of this standardization is the UK Museum Accreditation Scheme, administered by Arts Council England, which sets minimum criteria in governance, long-term collection care, and public access (Arts Council England, 2024). For house museums, this links curatorial decisions to collection policy, conservation planning, and institutional capacity. Independent charitable trusts such as the Charles Dickens Museum operate outside the National Trust and English Heritage structures but are held to the same accreditation standard, extending this framework to smaller, single-site personality houses.

To compare the number and variety of house museums in Türkiye and Istanbul with those in the United Kingdom and London, maps were prepared using data from the English Heritage website, identifying 438 examples in England, 78 in Scotland, 12 in Wales, and 6 in Northern Ireland (Figure 11 and Figure 12). These maps point to a far denser and more differentiated house museum landscape in the British context than in Türkiye, suggesting that, especially in London, house museums operate within a more established urban and institutional framework where different themes, scales, and modes of representation coexist in close proximity.

Within this landscape, the Charles Dickens Museum was chosen as the study's British reference case — not to match Manço's or İnönü's occupation, but for its institutional and archival depth, which grounds the UK comparison in concrete terms rather than national statistics. The museum operates under an independent charitable trust (Dickens House Fund, Charity No. 212172), differing from both the municipal administration of Barış Manço House Museum and the foundation-based administration of İnönü House Museum, and adding a further point of institutional contrast. Its documentation is extensive — an accredited collection of over 100,000 items, published guides, and detailed room-by-room curato-

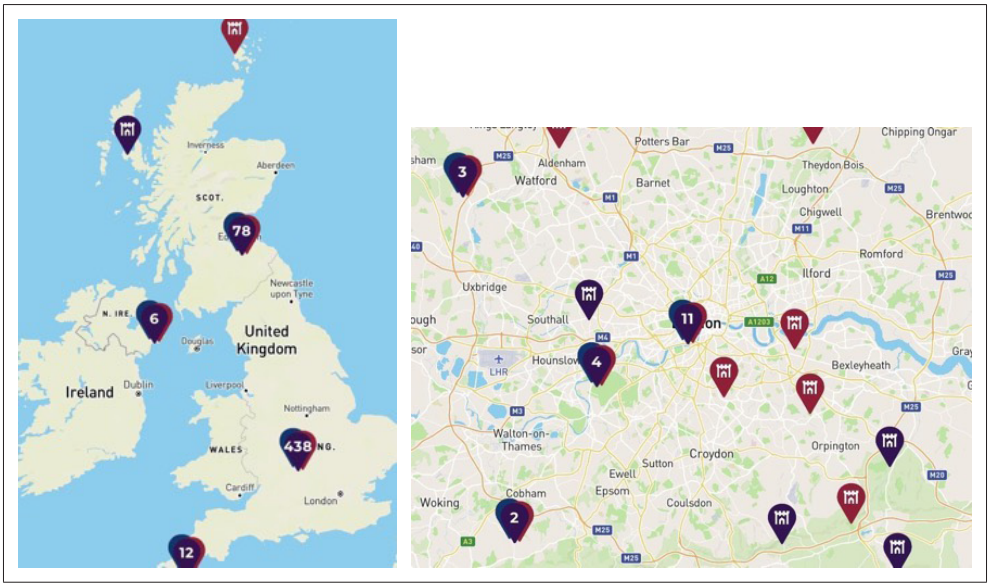

Figure 11, 12. Distribution of house museums across the United Kingdom and distribution of house museums in London (based on data from English Heritage).

rial records (Charles Dickens Museum, n.d.-d) — standing in clear contrast to the more limited archival infrastructure of the Turkish cases. This asymmetry is itself part of what the comparison is meant to reveal about the institutional conditions shaping house museum practice in each context.

CHARLES DICKENS MUSEUM

Charles Dickens, one of the most widely read novelists of the Victorian era, is regarded as a defining literary voice of nineteenth-century England. As a novelist, social critic, and public reader of his own works, he reached a broad readership and secured a lasting place in English literary culture, particularly through novels such as *Oliver Twist* and *Nicholas Nickleby*, both substantially written during his residence at 48 Doughty Street (Charles Dickens Museum, n.d.-a). He may therefore be considered one of the most visible literary figures in the history of English popular culture.

The Charles Dickens Museum was created when Dickens's house at 48 Doughty Street was opened to visitors by the Dick-

Figure 13. Charles Dickens Museum: Exterior façade, 48 Doughty Street, London. Photograph by the author, 2024.

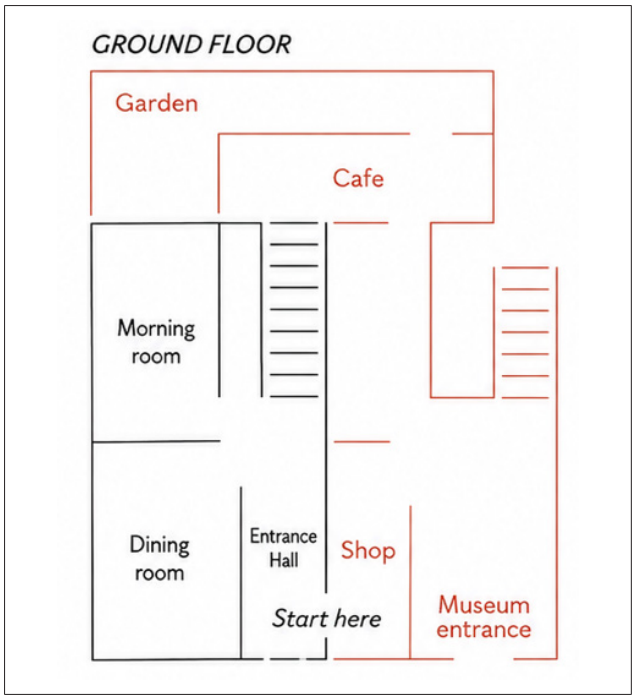

Figure 14. Charles Dickens Museum, ground floor plan, Adapted from the Charles Dickens Museum guide book (Charles Dickens Museum, n.d.-c).

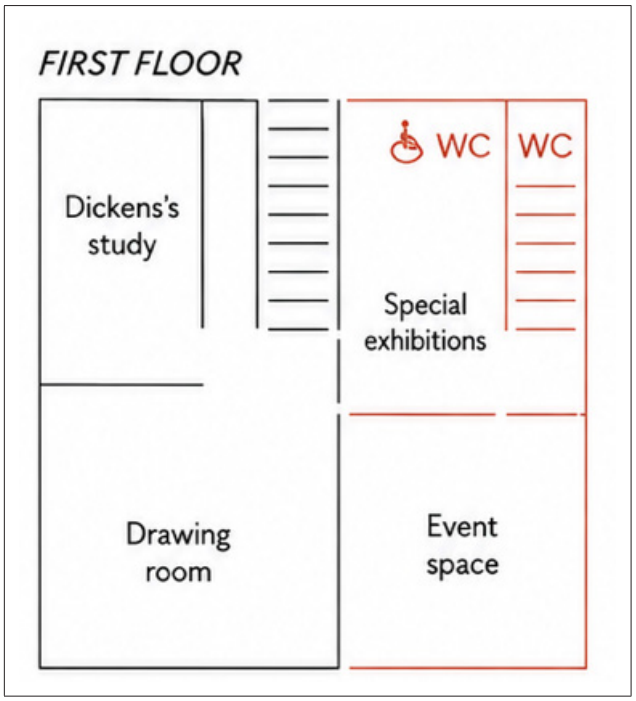

Figure 15. Charles Dickens Museum, first floor plan. Adapted from the Charles Dickens Museum guide book (Charles Dickens Museum, n.d.-c).

ens Fellowship in 1925 (Murray Birrell Chartered Surveyors, 2020), a model shaped by voluntary and philanthropic initiative rather than municipal or foundation-based administration (Art Fund, n.d.). The museum operates today under an independent charitable trust (Dickens House Fund, Charity No. 212172; Historic Houses, n.d.), and the 2012 refurbishment, which extended the museum into the neighbouring 49 Doughty Street, suggests that conservation decisions are reinforced through periodic institutional investment (Art Fund, n.d.) (Figure 13). The historic core at 48 Doughty Street, corresponding to Dickens's residence between 1837 and 1839, retains its original domestic rooms, while 49 Doughty Street houses the shop, café, and exhibition spaces added for the museum's contemporary operation (Charles Dickens Museum, n.d.-c).

As a personality house devoted to a literary figure, the museum builds its biographical narrative through domestic interiors reconstructed to evoke a specific historical moment. Its independent charitable governance shapes public access, while maintenance depends on the Fellowship's own resources rather than public subsidy. The ground floor holds the Entrance Hall, Dining Room, and Morning Room, opening directly onto the visitor route (Charles Dickens Museum, n.d.-c) (Figure 14).

The first floor concentrates the Drawing Room and Dickens's Study (Figure 15), the latter functioning as the visit's primary node. The authenticity claimed by the museum is fixed to this specific period rather than to Dickens's entire life: only objects directly tied to his own possession carry the claim to originality, while room-by-room thematic groupings and reconstructed period furnishings are visibly curatorial additions (Charles Dickens Museum, n.d.-a). Authenticity therefore operates on two registers: object-level authenticity (items Dickens owned or used) and setting-level authenticity (a staged historical moment), and the two do not always coincide.

This staging corresponds to what Lowenthal (1998) and Nora (1989) describe as the constructed nature of authenticity in memorial settings: the objects on display are genuinely associated with Dickens, yet their meaning is produced through their placement within a room-by-room narrative sequence. A hierarchy emerges in which the ground-floor rooms stage Dickens's social and family life, while Dickens's Study concentrates his literary identity as the visit's primary node (Charles Dickens Museum, n.d.-c). Circulation reinforces this hierarchy, moving visitors from shared domestic rooms toward the more private, authorial space of the Study, where original furnishings sit directly within the historic setting (Figure 16).

DISCUSSION

In house museums, representation extends beyond which objects are displayed or which rooms are opened. It also depends on ownership structure, management model, maintenance continuity, how interventions are decided, how

Figure 16. Dickens's Stud Room, first floor. Photograph by the author, 2024.

circulation is organized, and to which historical moment the building is fixed. In Türkiye, the absence of a standardized system causes these decisions to vary case by case; in the United Kingdom, similar tensions are addressed within more defined governance models, reporting practices, and conservation frameworks. The comparison is not meant to present Turkish house museums as deficient, but to clarify the conditions under which they take shape.

Ownership and governance form the first layer shaping what becomes possible in space. In Türkiye, house museums operate under municipal management, ministry-related institutions, foundations or associations, and private ownership, a multi-actor structure that strongly affects access regimes and the consistency of exhibition decisions (Günhan, 2011); the Barış Manço House Museum's municipal positioning, for instance, ties decisions directly to local administrative capacity. In the United Kingdom, membership-based charities such as the National Trust manage historic houses through long-term programs, while some state-owned properties are operated by charitable bodies with institutionalized structures (National Trust, 2024; English Heritage, 2015), making decision-making more traceable and systematic (Donnelly, 2002; Pustz, 2010). Independent charitable trusts such as the Dickens House Fund represent a third governance model, held to the same accreditation standards while operating outside these larger structures.

Funding forms a second layer shaping the continuity of spatial representation. In Türkiye, maintenance and exhibition updates are often sustained through fragmented resources — family budgets, municipal budgets, and limited partnerships — producing uneven sustainability from case to case (Uz, 2015; Bektaş & Yalçınkaya, 2020); in the Barış Manço House Museum, visible institutional support remains tied to shifting local priorities (Anadolu Ajansı, 2022), while continuity in the İnönü House Museum depends on the foundation's own resources and conservation approach, a more fragile model that can slow updating but preserve narrative within a more controlled framework. The main risk in both cases is that continuity depends on periodic budgets rather than long-term institutional guarantees. In the United Kingdom, multi-channel funding models — membership, donations and legacies, commercial income, and investment revenue — provide a stronger basis for long-term maintenance (National Trust, 2024), though financial pressure does not disappear and is instead managed through staff capacity, reservation systems, and maintenance cycles.

Exhibition language and spatial representation form the main plane through which the house museum operates as a reconstructed interior, reorganizing room hierarchy, redefining thresholds, and turning circulation into a narrative route (Butcher-Younghans, 1993; Günhan, 2011). In the Turkish examples, the interior is often fixed to a single historical moment: in the Barış Manço House Museum, this creates an intimate staging through the iconography of popular culture, while in the İnönü House Museum the same logic moves closer to a period-room model, concentrating biography within a stronger public-historical frame. In the British examples, this fixing is linked more explicitly to interpretation design — the interplay of text, object, and space produces a planned narrative architecture (Hooper-Greenhill, 2000; Bennett, 1995), including route design, display density, and the distinction

between public and back-of-house areas (Sparke et al., 2006; Pavoni, 2001). In the Charles Dickens Museum, this logic is vertical rather than horizontal: the ground floor concentrates semi-public, biographically anchored rooms, while upper floors stage an increasingly private, authorial identity along a numbered route.

The United Kingdom system has been used here as a reference rather than a model to be adopted directly. Its practice handles the balance between conservation and access within a more documentable decision structure, making visible institutional tools through which decision-making can become more traceable than in the more fragmented Turkish context (Donnelly, 2002; Pustz, 2010; Sparke et al., 2006). It also allows authenticity to be discussed through the structure of spatial experience as well as through original objects, since debates on staged and experience-based authenticity suggest that authenticity in house museums operates through selection and construction (ICOMOS, 1994; MacCannell, 1973; Wang, 1999).

CONCLUSION

This study set out to examine how house museums in different national contexts construct architectural space as an instrument of representation, through three questions posed in the introduction.

How is domestic circulation transformed into a museum route? Across the cases, circulation is redirected through the selective opening and closing of rooms and the introduction of directional cues that move visitors from public or semi-public space toward increasingly private space. This pattern holds in the Barış Manço House Museum, the İnönü House Museum, and the Charles Dickens Museum, though its formalization differs: in the British case it is planned as an explicit interpretive device, while in the Turkish cases it follows more directly from the building's own domestic logic.

Which rooms and thresholds become focal points of biographical representation? In each case, one room concentrates the represented figure's public identity — the summer garden for Manço's musicianship, the study and balcony-adjacent sitting area for İnönü's statesmanship, Dickens's Study for his authorship — while adjoining rooms recede into a supporting, humanising role. The threshold between these zones marks the boundary between a public persona and a private life, and its position is a curatorial choice as much as a spatial one.

How do governance and access conditions affect the spatial and curatorial organization of the house? Governance shapes not only funding continuity but which interventions become possible and visible. Municipal administration ties conservation decisions to local political priorities (Barış Manço House Museum); foundation-based governance preserves character within a more controlled, family-mediated framework (İnönü House Museum); and independent, accredited trusts allow interpretation to be planned more systematically, within institutional benchmarks largely absent from the Turkish context (Charles Dickens Museum).

Read together, these findings support a single comparative argument: the redefinition of room hierarchy, the conversion of circulation into a narrative route, and the selective opening or closure of thresholds are recurring mechanisms through which representation is produced — and the degree to which they are formally planned, rather than emerging informally from domestic use, tracks with the presence or absence of institutionalized interpretive practice (Smith, 2006). This is the study's main contribution: the Türkiye–UK comparison shows that these mechanisms are shared across contexts, but that their formalization is not — a distinction individual case studies, considered separately, cannot make visible. This strengthens the spatial line of analysis often secondary in the Turkish literature, approaching the house museum as an architectural regime of representation operating through the scale of the house. The transformation from house to museum should therefore be understood not simply as a change of function, but as a reorganization of visibility, movement, access, and meaning within the domestic interior.

Future research may expand this inquiry by producing a broader national inventory of house museums in Türkiye, developing comparative analyses of intervention levels, and examining house museum practices outside Istanbul in relation to local administrative capacity and heritage policy. Compared with the United Kingdom, such museums remain relatively limited in Türkiye; yet given the country's political, cultural, and social history, many residential buildings appear to hold potential for future transformation into house museums, realizing which depends on preserving buildings, assembling coherent collections, and establishing sustainable models of ownership and management.

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