

SOMERSET HOUSE

Frequently Asked Questions for a Wedding at Somerset House.

At what time can I book a registrar for my civil ceremony?

Please allow an hour from the start of your hire period to the start of your ceremony. The registrars will require time to meet the couple before the ceremony either separately or together. It is also our experience that wedding guests always arrive sporadically and an hour also allows for this and gives time for final preparations.

Can I get married outside?

Unfortunately not - civil ceremonies may only be performed within the Portico Rooms, Navy Board Rooms and Embankment East as these are our only licensed space in Somerset House for civil ceremonies.

Can I hire Somerset House for a ceremony only or for a couple of hours?

Yes, however all our venues are hired out to one client exclusively each day. Therefore, whether you chose to utilise a venue for a couple of hours or up to the full hire period, you will still incur the same venue hire fees.

Can we provide our own portable stereo for the ceremony?

We have a fully PAT tested CD player which can be set out for you at the back of the ceremony room. You will need to allocate someone to operate this on the day. Please be aware that this CD player is only suitable for low background music during the ceremony and not for the provision of music throughout the day of your event or evening entertainment.

Is confetti allowed?

Confetti is not allowed within or outside the venue including rice, petals or the use of biodegradable confetti or bubble machines.

Can the photographer use other spaces outside of the hired areas for photos?

You will be able to take photos in public areas but please note that both these areas are open to the public and therefore will not be closed for your wedding or photos.

Is there an extra room for bags/ changing/ band etc?

There will be rooms in The Portico Rooms and The Navy Board Rooms which can be used for storage and changing rooms. One of the rooms will also be used for your meeting with the Registrar prior to the ceremony. However these room will not be locked and items are left at the owner's risk. Please bear in mind that all personal belongings, gifts, etc must be removed from the venue at the end of the celebrations.

What do the venue hire fees include?

- Exclusive use of the venue on your wedding day for the full hire period

**SOMERSET
HOUSE**

SOMERSET HOUSE ENTERPRISES LIMITED COMPANY NO 3920330.
WHOSE REGISTERED OFFICE IS SOMERSET HOUSE STRAND LONDON
WC2R 1LA. VAT REGISTRATION NO 751893404

 **THE
COURTAULD
Gallery**

THE COURTAULD GALLERY COMPANY NO 4464432.
WHOSE REGISTERED ADDRESS IS SOMERSET HOUSE STRAND
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- The full operational support from our Event Team in the run up to your event is included and one of our Event Managers to co-ordinate and deliver your wedding on the day
- Security staff
- Cleaning
- Event hostesses

Who will be there from Somerset House on the day and what will they do?

You will have a member of the Events Team present on the day of your wedding to help co-ordinate proceedings. They will also oversee the planning of access for caterers, florists, musicians and other suppliers. They will also brief your hostesses and will be onsite throughout the event.

Can I hire a venue for a half day or for a couple of hours?

Yes, however all our venues are hired out based on the exclusive use of that particular venue on your chosen day. Therefore whether you choose to utilise a venue for a couple of hours or up to the full hire period, you will still incur the same venue hire fees.

What is the booking procedure?

- Provisional bookings can be held for up to 14 days without commitment.
- Confirmation of a wedding requires a signed copy of our terms and conditions, together with payment for our venue hire fees + VAT
- A 30% deposit invoice will be sent out with your contract and the remaining 70% balance invoice will be sent to you 6 weeks prior to your wedding date. All payments must be paid 14 days prior to the event date.

Does Somerset House ever offer a discount on their venue hire fees?

The funds generated from venue hire are a vital source of income for Somerset House, a charitable trust, we therefore try and maximise revenue from events and other commercial activities.

Can we bring our own caterer, entertainment or production company?

Somerset House venues are all Grade I, Heritage-Listed buildings and the greatest of care must be taken to prevent damage. Therefore, only our approved suppliers for catering, entertainment and production are allowed to provide a service for any event at Somerset House. This also allows us to restrict the range of suppliers to those that only provide a service to the very high standards of delivery that we expect for our clients. Please be aware that only our resident caterer, Leiths, may provide catering for the Seamen's Hall.

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What about access and set up for caterers and suppliers?

The start of your hire period marks the point at which your chosen venue will be ready to receive you and your guests. Caterer and supplier access to the building for setup is pre-arranged directly between your suppliers and with Somerset House Events Team, based around on the event requirements.

Can we use our own florist or photographer?

Only our approved suppliers for catering, entertainment and production are allowed to provide a service for any event at Somerset House. Suppliers that provide a service which are not intrusive by their nature, do not require power from the venue and are not logistically crucial to your event may be sourced outside of our approved list. Florists and photographers fall under the latter category and are therefore not limited to our approved suppliers list but we have a selection of recommended florists and photographers that we regard highly.

Are we able to outsource a DJ/ Band?

Only accredited suppliers for entertainment are allowed to provide a service for any event at Somerset House. Occasionally non-approved entertainment can be accommodated but only with prior consent from our Event Team, which will require full adherence to our venue regulations, Somerset House premises license and health & safety protocol. Please see our approved suppliers list for accredited entertainment suppliers.

Where can our DJ/band set up for the evening entertainment?

All amplified music must go through the sound system provided by your chosen production or entertainment company.

Live bands and musicians are permitted in the Portico Rooms but unfortunately dancing is not, for structural reasons. DJs are permitted in either Embankment East or the Seamen's Hall, as well as live bands and musicians

Can we deliver or set up the day before an event?

All setup, breakdown and deliveries must be on the day / evening of your wedding with prior consent and agreed times with the Somerset House Events team. The Events Team will liaise directly with our approved suppliers to arrange suitable delivery times based on your requirements. Additional set up / pack down time may be available, usually for a hire fee.

Can we arrange to leave items in the venue overnight?

No, everything must be collected immediately at the end of your wedding day. Somerset House cannot except any responsibility for items left at any of our venues.

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Can my wedding go on later than 11pm?

Yes, we have a licence until 1am (last orders and music ends at 12.30am) and this is available upon request at an additional charge.

Can we provide our own alcohol (BYO)?

Yes - please liaise directly with Somerset House approved caterers to discuss your event beverage options. All Somerset House caterers offer the option of client self-supply of alcohol, drinks packages on a per head basis, the consumption of beverage on a sales or return basis and evening cash bars.

Are there any restrictions regarding theming or decorations?

Due to the Heritage Listing of all of our venues, nothing may be affixed to any surface, either internally or externally. Freestanding decorations or stands are advised but please consult with our Events Team to discuss your requirements or request.

Can we use our own electrical equipment in the venue?

All electrical equipment must be provided by Somerset House approved suppliers. This is due to the site sensitive nature of Somerset House venues, for health and safety and to ensure the success of your event.

Can we smoke inside the venue?

No, smoking is only permitted outside the venue.

Can we have candles, if so what are the restrictions?

Unfortunately candles and naked flames are not permitted at Somerset House. However, florists are able to provide battery operated candles which are a great alternative.

Is there any parking at Somerset House?

We can accommodate 2 bridal cars to pull into the upper terrace; however they will not be able to park there for the duration of the day.

Somerset House does not have any parking on site. The nearest car park is at the NCP on Drury Lane, or meter parking is available on the Aldwych and Victoria Embankment.

Can we have outdoor furniture or games in the Courtyard?

The courtyard is a public place and unfortunately no additional furniture or games can be placed outside of the hiring space. However if you have hired the Seamen's Hall you may have outdoor games in the included section of River Terrace after 6.30pm.

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Do you have an outdoor space that is available for hire?

Somerset House offers various venues that are available for private hire. Our venues come with varying degrees of outdoor space that is included in your exclusive hire space but (with the exception of the River Terrace) the focus of your wedding will most often be indoors.

The River Terrace and Courtyard are public spaces and although you have access to them, do bear in mind they are not private to you and your party.

Can we hire a space for a photo shoot or filming?

We have a variety of locations at Somerset House in addition to our venues - call the Events Team as they will be happy to discuss these opportunities with you.

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