

Falkirk Cultural Center

Rental Information Packet

Thank you for selecting Falkirk as a potential venue for your event. This packet provides an overview of the steps required to reserve the Falkirk Cultural Center, outlines policies, and provides sample layouts and helpful resources for your event planning. Please review the material carefully and let us know if you have any questions.

Falkirk is open to the public Tuesday - Friday from 1:00pm-4:30pm. Hours may be modified due to holidays and/or private events. Staff are available during these hours to answer questions, show the facility and grounds, and make the galleries available during art exhibits. Modified hours are posted at the front door and on Facebook.

We do our best to respond to your inquiries as soon as possible.

Sincerely,
Team Falkirk

(415) 485-3328
Falkirk@cityofsanrafael.org
www.cityofsanrafael.org/falkirk/



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Rental Application Process

1. **Review material included in this packet before completing an application.**
2. **Confirm availability.**
 - Contact Falkirk by phone or email to **check availability**. It is helpful to have at least one alternate date when checking availability.
 - Visit in person or send a representative. Sample layouts are included in this packet and we suggest searching “Falkirk Wedding images” online to help you visualize ways to utilize different spaces. When possible, we feel visiting in person is the best way to be confident that our venue is the best for your event.
3. **Complete and sign the Rental Application and submit** it by email to Falkirk@cityofsanrafael.org or in person **with deposit**. Deposit can be cash, check or credit card. Checks made payable to “City of San Rafael”. If mailing, please send to:
San Rafael Library & Recreation Department
ATTN: Falkirk
618 B Street
San Rafael, CA 94901
4. **Falkirk staff accept applications one year in advance.** Once your application and deposit are processed, staff will email you a rental agreement to review and digitally sign. The email will be sent from recreation@cityofsanrafael.org.

The **signed contract** will serve as confirmation of rental for your desired date. **You are responsible for contacting Falkirk Rentals by phone or email no later than 45 days out from the event to initiate payment of the balance due for the rental, unless you schedule automatic payment. To make payments on rental fees or arrange for incremental payments, call staff** during office hours. For your security, please do not leave a voicemail with credit card information.

Requirements

1. **Deposit.** A refundable reservation/damage deposit of \$1,000 is required with your application to secure your date. Deposit is refundable after your event. See details below:
 - The \$1,000 reservation deposit acts to secure your date and serve as a damage deposit.
 - The deposit is separate from rental fees and will be deposited/processed at booking. The deposit is not applied toward the rental balance.
 - To make payment by credit card for the deposit, please note who staff should contact to request card details. For security, we no longer request credit card information on applications.
 - The deposit may be **retained if**:
 - o Applicant cancels the event at any time.
 - o The amount refunded will be reduced to cover any extra costs incurred for cleaning, damage to facility or grounds, or exceeded rental time. If event exceeds rental time, fees are calculated at 2x the normal hourly rate. Please allocate appropriate time for clean-up.
 - o **Additional charges** may be applied if extra costs exceed the deposit.
 - o Deposit is transferable if the event date is changed.
 - **Returning deposit.** Most deposits made by credit cards can be returned to the same card the week after the event if no changes were made to hours or extra fees. Reimbursements that require a City-generated check can take up to 6 weeks. Please notify staff if your mailing address changes.



2. Insurance

Renters may purchase coverage through the City or provide their own insurance.

- **Purchasing insurance through the City of San Rafael.** The cost to purchase insurance is based on maximum number of attendees and whether alcohol is served. (Cost ranges from \$70 to \$190.) Contact Falkirk Staff for an estimate.
- **Providing your own insurance** requires the following:
 - o Certificate must include a separate endorsement “naming the City of San Rafael as additional insured”.
 - o All rentals are required to provide a Certificate of Insurance for liability for a minimum of \$1,000,000.
 - o Insurance certificates must be received by the City of San Rafael Community Services Dept. at least 45 days prior to event.

Note: Organizations/individuals that have insurance through a parent organization may have one certificate issued for all the organization’s uses of the facility.

3. Security

Security is required year-round for rentals at Falkirk. This requirement ensures privacy for you and your guests as exclusive users of an otherwise public facility. The charge for security services is \$40/per hour (30 minutes before guest arrive to 30 minutes after the end of the rental) and is listed as an “additional fee” on your rental contract. Security rate is \$55/hour after 8 hours to reflect overtime. The security fee is not included in the hourly rental rate.

4. Alcohol

If alcohol will be **sold** at the event (applicable to **non-profit agencies only**), renter must provide a copy of the license issued by the State Dept. of Alcoholic Beverage Control **14 days prior to the event**, and renter must comply with all the rules and regulations of the State Dept. of Alcoholic Beverage Control.

Note: Under certain circumstances related to size and nature of the event, renter will be required to read, sign and adhere to City of San Rafael Alcohol Management Policy. Falkirk Staff will notify renter and provide a copy of this Policy if it is required.

5. Parking

Renters are responsible for notifying their guests and vendors of parking restrictions around the Falkirk Cultural Center prior to and on the day of the event. Falkirk has no jurisdiction over parking enforcement and is not responsible for parking tickets. Parking maps and details available through the City’s Parking Services Department: www.cityofsanrafael.org/departments/parking/. Note: Parking restrictions for the parking lots located next to and across from Falkirk Cultural Center differ from weekdays to weekends, signs are posted.

6. Guest Capacities

Falkirk can accommodate up to 125 guests for outdoor events and up to 100 indoors using the entire first floor (the parlor can seat roughly 50 people at tables and 70 theatre style). Please refer to the sample layouts included in this packet when planning seating capacities and any equipment or supplies you may rent from an outside vendor.

7. Final Payment of Rental Fees

Balance of rental fees are due at least **45 days prior** to the event. (**This due date will appear on your Rental Agreement.**) Please note, if the event occurs within 45 days of booking, deposit and full balance is required when submitting the application. If the event is canceled, the deposit is retained, and any payments submitted are refundable until 45 days prior to event, after which time, all processed payments are retained by the City of San Rafael.

Payments may be made in increments or all at once, so long as the full balance is paid at least 45 days in advance of the rental. **To make payments on rental fees or arrange for incremental payments, call or email Falkirk staff** during office hours. Please do not leave voicemail with payment information.



Rental Hours, Rates, Required Fees, and Refunds

1. Rental Hours

Renters may reserve the facility from 8:00am-11:00pm. Renters are responsible for all set up and clean up and should reserve the appropriate hours needed.

Important end times to note:

- **Indoor** event activities must **conclude by 10:00pm**.
- **Outdoor** event activities must **conclude by 9:00pm**.
- **Full clean-up** and rental hours must **conclude by 11:00pm**.

Note: To avoid exceeding rental times, please plan at least 1.5-2 hours for clean-up. Rentals that exceed stated rental hours are **charged double** the hourly rate, rounded up in 30-minute increments. All renters, guests, vendors, and rented equipment must leave the property by the end time listed on the rental agreement.

2. Rental Rates & Minimum Rental Lengths

	Minimum Rental Length	Non-Profit Organizations (Tax ID # required)	Private Use & Non-Profit Fundraisers	Commercial Groups
Monday - Thursday	2 hours	\$100R/\$120NR Per Hour	\$150R/\$170NR Per Hour	\$200R/\$220NR Per Hour
Friday & Sunday	6 hours	\$900R/1,020NR Flat Rate	\$1,350R/1,470NR Flat Rate	\$1,800R/1,920NR Flat Rate
Saturday	10 hours	\$1,500R/1,700NR Flat Rate	\$2,250R/2,450NR Flat Rate	\$3,000R/3,200NR Flat Rate
Friday – Sunday Additional Hours	30 minutes	\$150R/\$170NR Per Hour	\$225R/\$245NR Per Hour	\$300R/\$320NR Per Hour

R = San Rafael Resident; NR = Non-Resident

3. Required Fees

- **Deposit:** \$1,000, refundable, paid as a separate transaction from rental fees
- **Rental Fee:** See above rates. Please allow at least 1.5 hours for set-up and 1.5 hours for clean-up, as these are the responsibility of the renter.
- **Security fee:** \$40/hour for 30 minutes before guests arrive to 30 minutes after the end of the rental period.
- **Insurance:** May be purchased through the City of San Rafael for roughly \$70-\$190/day and is based on maximum number of attendees, whether or not alcohol will be served. Renter may choose to provide their own policy. Please see page 3 for details.

4. Refunds

- **All fees, insurance, and confirmed hours must be received no later than 45 days prior to event.**
- If cancellation occurs within 45 days of rental, the City of San Rafael has the right to retain all monies.
- If cancellation occurs more than 45 days before the rental, the \$1,000 deposit is retained, and the date is made available for another party to reserve.

Venue Details & Included Amenities

Details listed below outline event space, amenities, and equipment that is included with your rental fees and should help you determine what additional equipment you may want to rent from an outside vendor or provide yourself. Please remember that renters are responsible for their own set up and clean up and the necessary time must be included in the rental hours.

Falkirk Staff are on site during rentals as the City representative. Their role is to greet the renter or renter-designated contact person to walk through the facility before and after the event, provide access to electrical, lighting, cleaning supplies, and any additional amenities like fans and easels. They also serve as your connection to City-contracted security staff. They do their best to make sure rentals conclude on time and follow



cleaning requirements so that the full deposit may be returned following the event. They are not responsible for any set up or clean up.

1. Event Space Included in Your Rental

First Floor: Parlor, Dining Room, Solarium, Kitchen, two restrooms, and outdoor Veranda

Second Floor: Wedding Suite (two rooms and a restroom for changing and preparations), Changing Room (one small room and restroom). Showers not available.

Three Art Galleries on the Second Floor may be made available upon request and at the discretion of the exhibiting artists.

Outdoor Spaces: Wedding Lawn, Rose Garden, Veranda, and sloped lawn areas.

Note: Falkirk has central heating, but no air conditioning. Staff can provide fans listed in “Additional Amenities” below and renters may provide their own.

2. Venue Measurements

Outdoor Event Spaces

Wedding Lawn: 72' x 30'

Rose Garden: Unusual Dimensions

Veranda: 36' x 18'

Mansion Spaces

Parlor: roughly 25'8" x 23' x 16' x 23' (see details in sample layout)

Veranda: 36' x 18'

Side Porch: 30' x 6'

Front Porch: 10' x 10'

Dining Room 16'x19'

3. Furniture Included

- Chairs: (100) folding chairs, mahogany
- Rectangular Tables: (6) 6' x 2-1/2', brown; (8) 6' x 2-1/2', white; and (1) 5' x 2-1/2', brown
- Dining Room Table: 8' x 4'
- Round Table (dining room): 52" diameter
- Side Table (dining room): 62.5" x 20"
- Foyer Table (entry hall): 51" x 26"
- Bar Table (solarium): 6' x 2'
- Parlor Carpet: 12' 8-1/2" x 14' 7"

4. Additional Amenities

- Baby Grand Piano
- Sofas: Parlor (3) and Dining Room (1)
- Wooden Lectern: 18" x 12" x 52"
- Fans: (3) small fans and (5) standing oscillating fans
- Easels: (8) Basic easels available upon request for additional signage.
- Extension cords available upon request
- 2 prong adaptors for outlets available upon request
- Kitchen Oven: 2 racks; 22 1/2" x 29"
- Stove top- 6 gas burners
- Commercial refrigerator
- **Free Wi-Fi** available within the Mansion. Please ask staff for network information.

Note: Falkirk does not have a freezer or ice maker.



Property Map

Falkirk has 3 outdoor spaces. Exclusive use of all three areas plus the lawn areas are included in the rental agreement.

Wedding Lawn: 72' x 30'

Rose Garden: approx. 46' x 17'

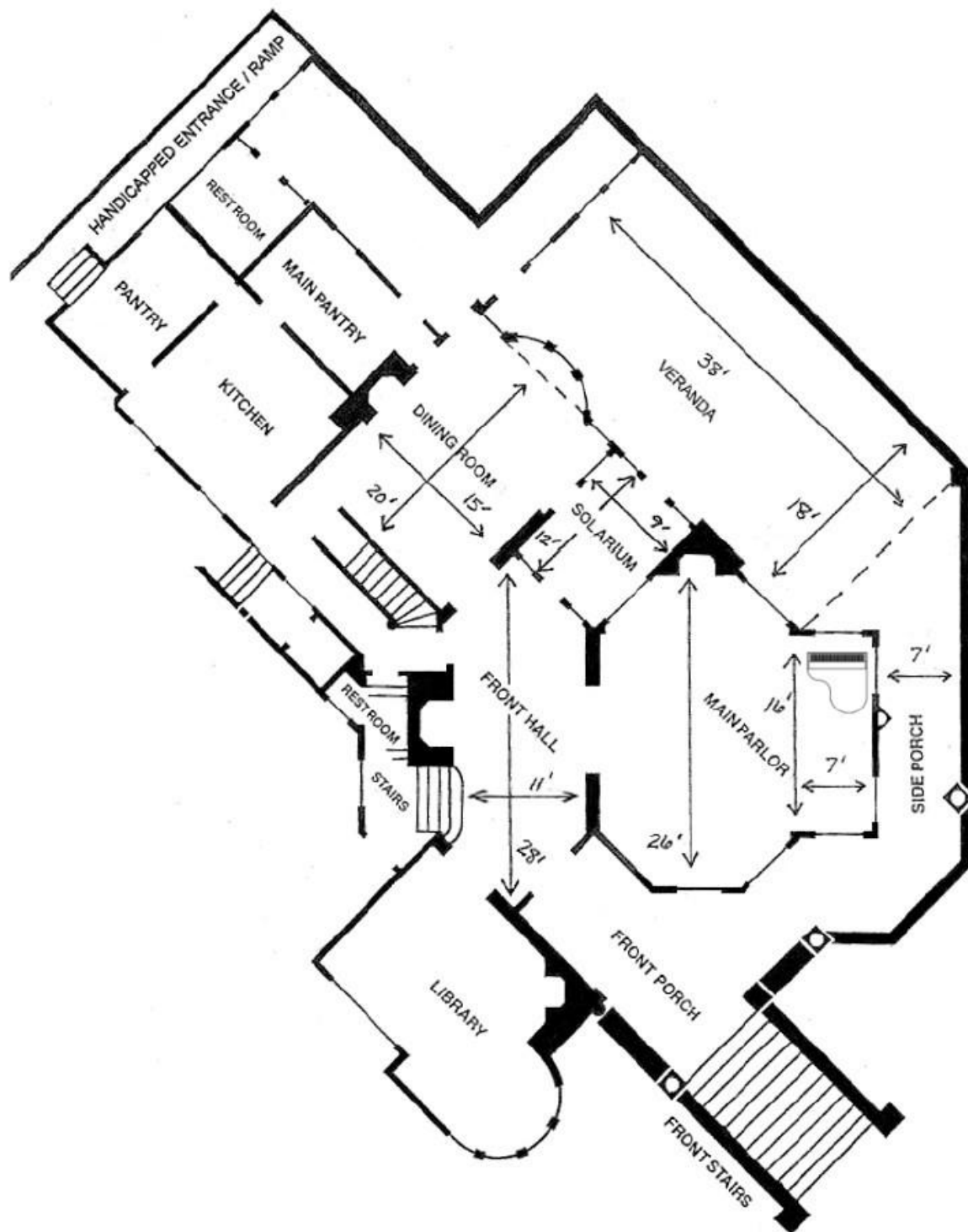
Veranda: 36' x 18'

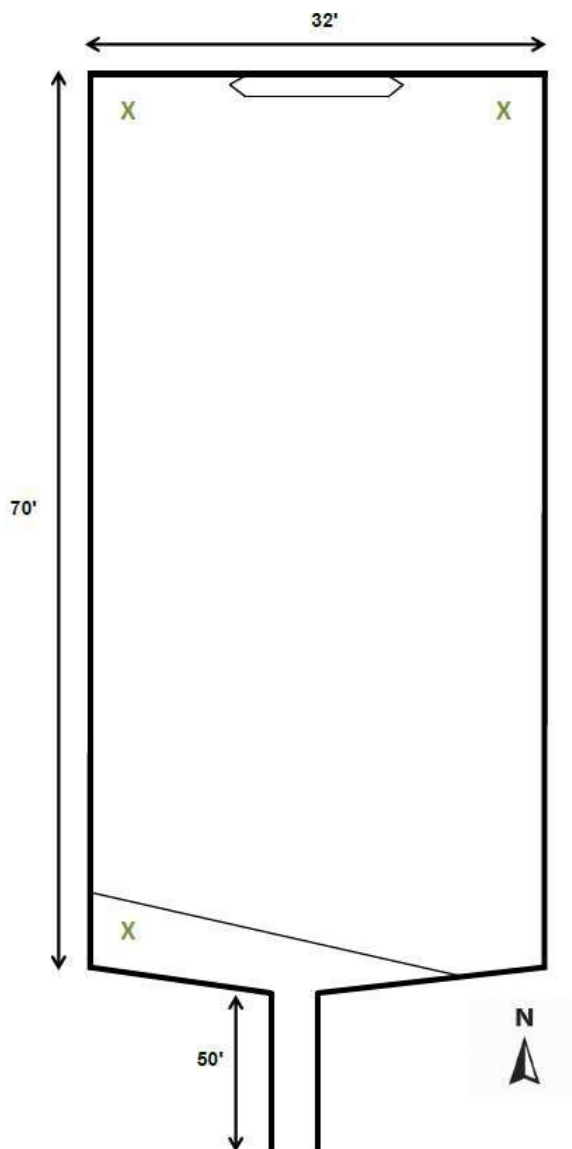


Falkirk Staff Tip: Renters may want to consider how spaces will be transitioned during the event program. For example, moving provided or rented tables & chairs, what guests will do or where they will go during the transition time, etc. It is easy to want to use all spaces, but that often increases the cost to the renter in time, equipment and decorations.

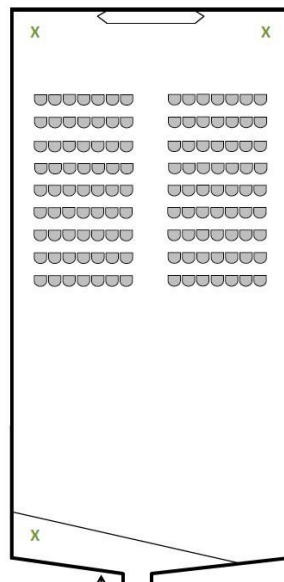


Mansion First Floor Plan & Measurements

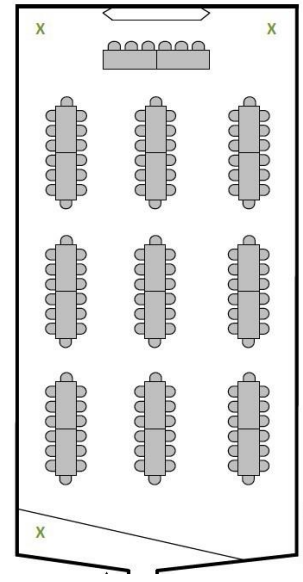




WEDDING LAWN



Seats approx. 125

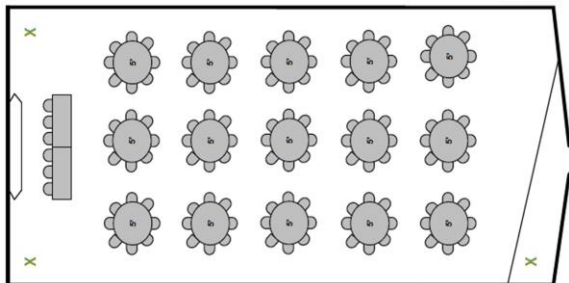


Seats approx. 78



Note: There is no built-in electricity on the Wedding Lawn. Electricity can be provided via extension cords from the Greenhouse. Suggested locations are indicated by X. Lamp posts or up lighting may be rented from a party equipment vendor.

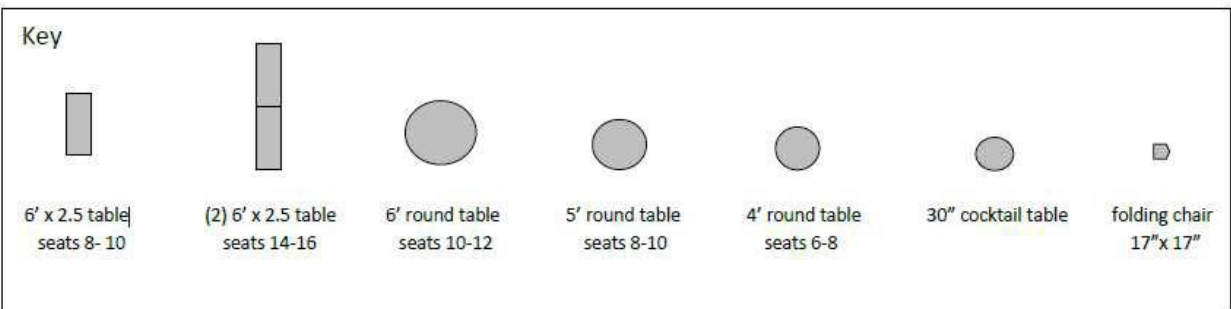




Seats approx. 125



Seats approx. 98

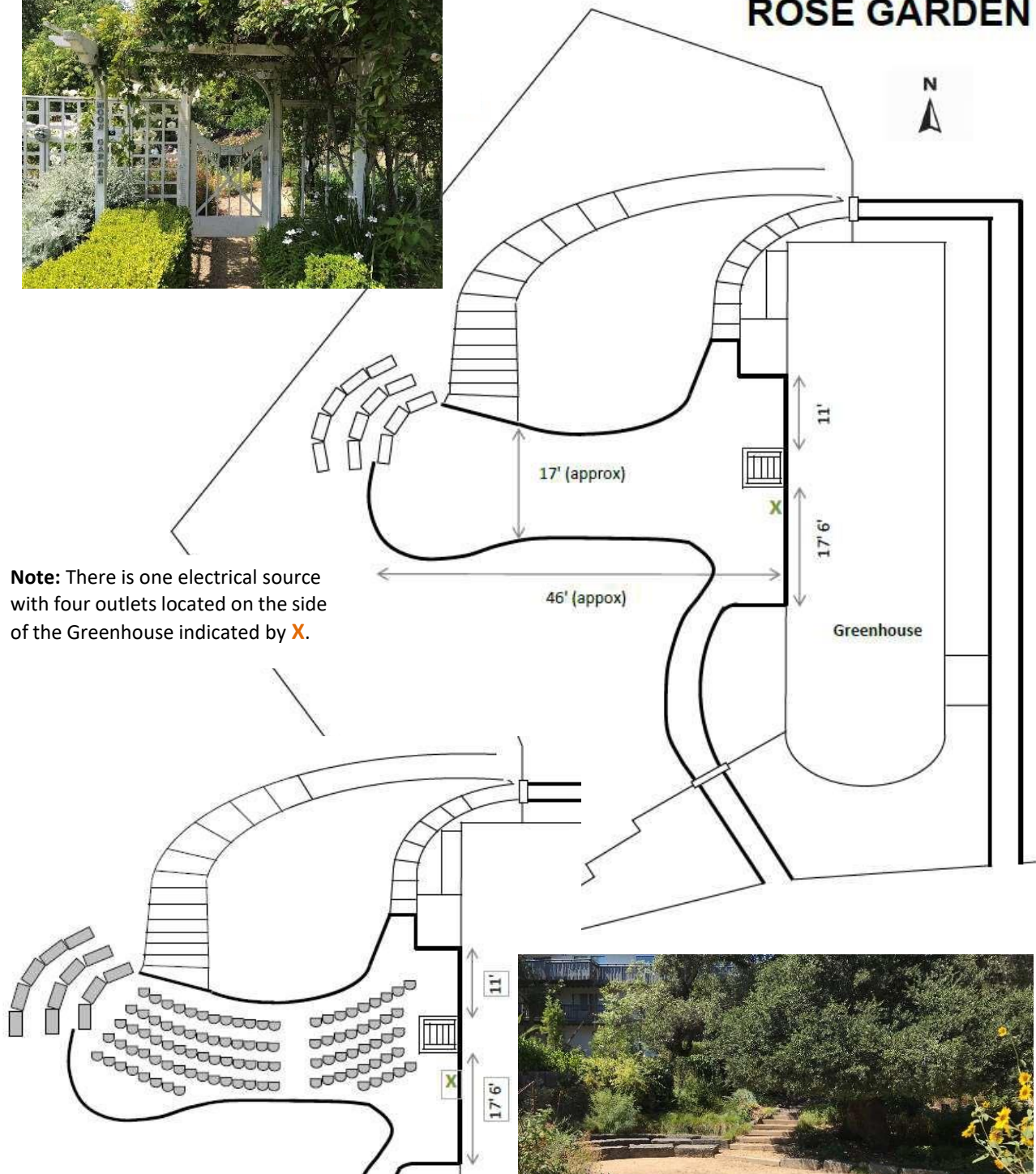


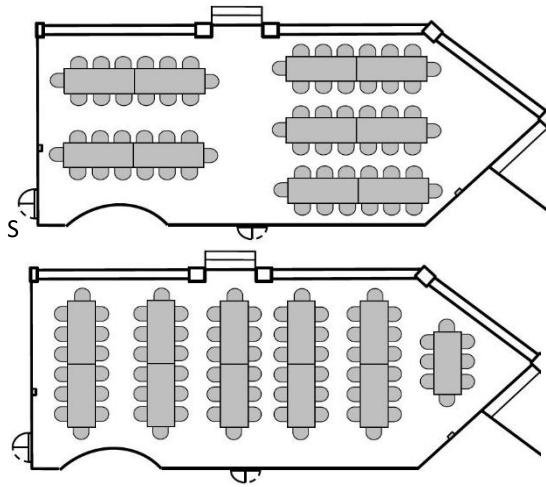
Note: Falkirk provides rectangular tables. Round tables are coordinated by the renter through an outside vendor.



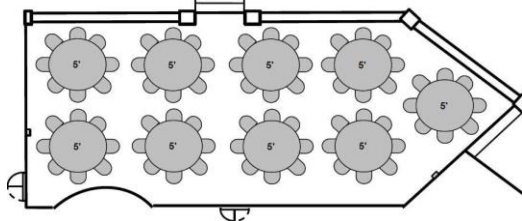


ROSE GARDEN





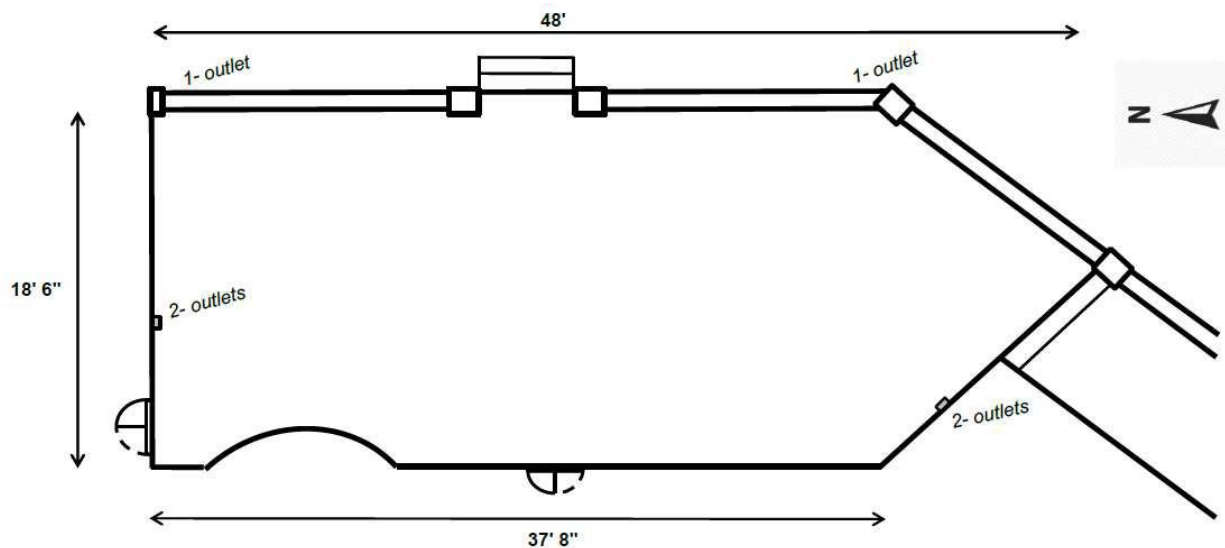
Seats approx. 76

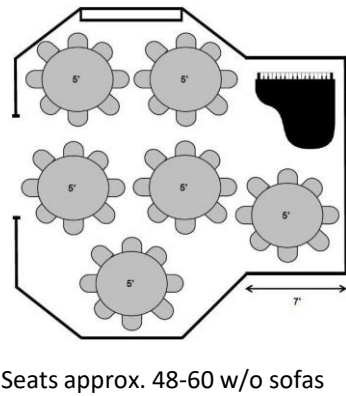
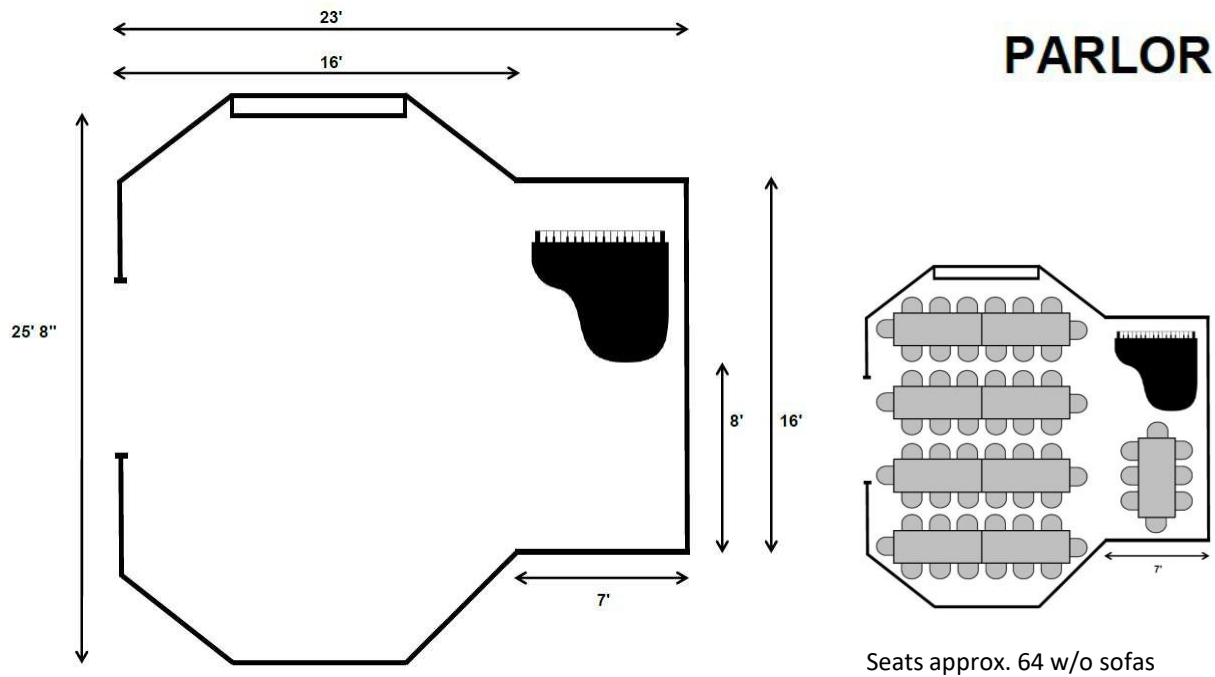


Seats approx. 72-90



VERANDA



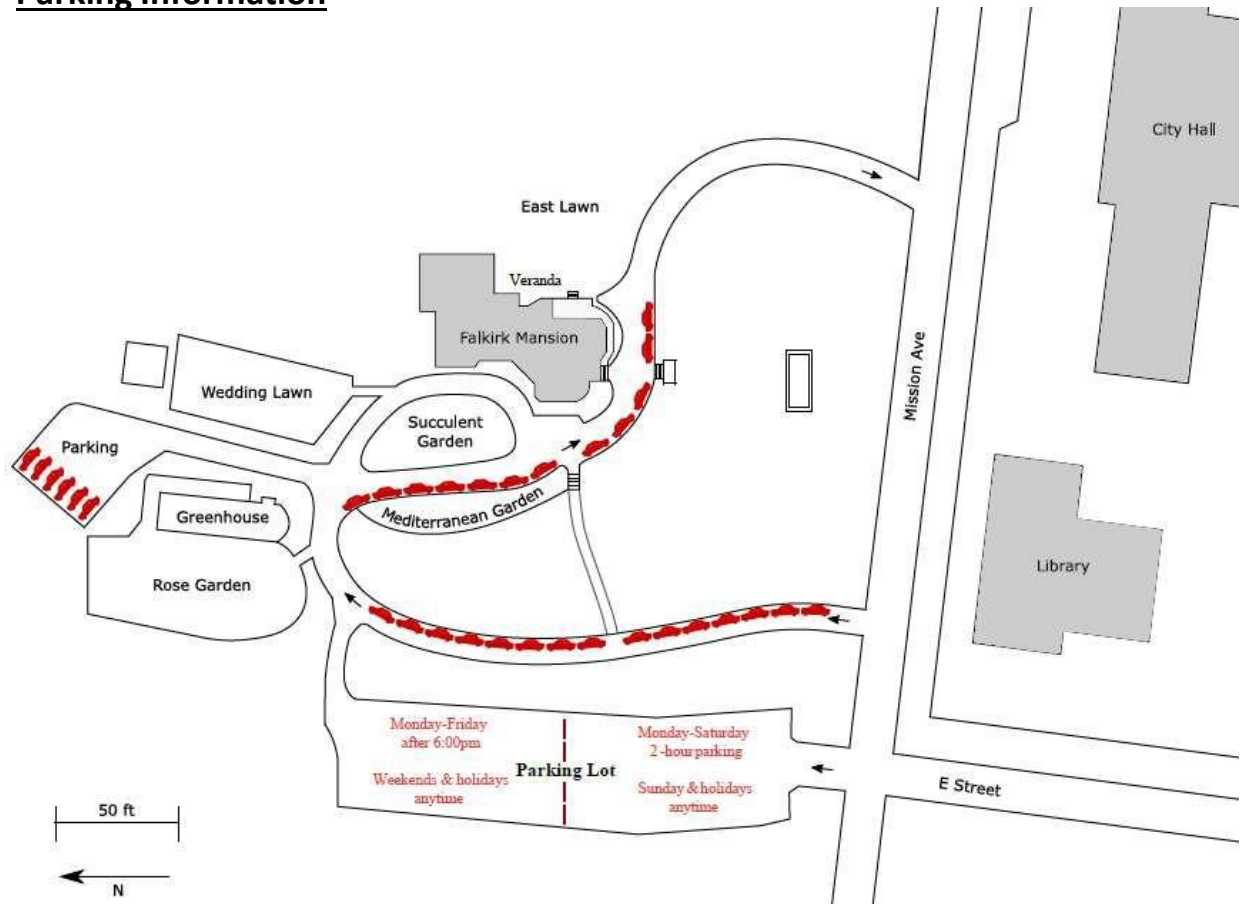


Key						
6' x 2.5' table seats 8-10	(2) 6' x 2.5' table seats 14-16	6' round table seats 10-12	5' round table seats 8-10	4' round table seats 6-8	30" cocktail table	folding chair 17"x 17"

Note: Falkirk provides rectangular tables. Round tables are coordinated by the renter through an outside vendor.



Parking Information



Guests and vendors may park along the right side of the driveway and in the back lot behind the greenhouse as long as a fire lane is accessible in case of emergency.

Note: Falkirk Staff do not have any jurisdiction over parking violations in neighboring lots and streets. Please encourage guests to read signs carefully and consider parking alternatives through the City's Parking Services Department: www.cityofsanrafael.org/departments/parking/

Driving Directions

Falkirk Cultural Center

1408 Mission Avenue, San Rafael, CA 94901
(415) 485-3328

Driving North:

US 101 North
Central San Rafael Exit
Stay in center lane, 5 blocks
Left onto Mission Avenue
Stay right on Mission at B Street
Driveway is on your right, just before "E Street"

Driving South:

US 101 South
Central San Rafael Exit
Right at first light, onto Mission Avenue
Stay right on Mission at B Street
Driveway is on your right, just before "E Street"



Facility Rules & Regulations

The below rules and regulations are in addition to the rules and requirements contained elsewhere in the Falkirk Rental packet.

1. Rental Applicant as stated on Rental Application must be 21 years of age.
2. If the Rental Applicant whose signature appears on the Rental Application cannot be present during the event, he/she must indicate a Designated Representative on the Rental Application who will be present during the entire event and responsible for checking in with staff at the beginning and end of the rental.
3. Rental Agreements are non-transferable between persons.
4. At the discretion of the Falkirk Supervisor, additional security officers, Falkirk staff, or bonds or insurance may be required at the renter's expense.
5. There is no smoking, of either cigarettes or e-cigarettes, permitted indoors or outdoors on Falkirk Cultural Center property or anywhere within the City of San Rafael. See City Municipal Code [SRMC 09.04](#)
6. In adherence to Fire Code, at no time shall exits be covered or obstructed.
7. Barbecues and open-flame cook-tops are not allowed.
8. Portable air conditioning units are not allowed.
9. Outdoor heat lamps are not allowed.
10. No candles or open flame are allowed (except STERNO, which is frequently used by caterers).
11. No adhesives, nails, screws, staples, tacks, etc., in walls, woodwork, on windows or any other surface throughout the Mansion or on the property are allowed.
12. Rice, birdseed, confetti, rose or other flower petals, and open flames are not allowed, indoors or outdoors, on any part of Falkirk Cultural Center property.
13. Approval in advance is **REQUIRED** for any of the following: Additional indoor or outdoor lighting; outdoor tent on Veranda or Wedding Lawn; Dance Floors; Food Trucks.
14. Balloons and/or balloon string are permitted but must be to be removed by the end of the event.
15. Curtains, shades, drapes and windows are not to be rearranged or opened except by Falkirk Staff.
16. Most interior furnishings (including the piano) are not to be moved except with Falkirk Staff approval. Exceptions are the red chairs in the dining room and the sofas in the parlor, which may be moved to other locations within the first floor of the Mansion. The bar table in the solarium may be moved within the Mansion or taken outside onto to the Veranda.
17. A ***Clean-Up Requirements Checklist*** is used during the rental and **MUST** be signed by Rental Applicant/ Designated Representative at the end of the event with Falkirk Staff to be eligible for refund of deposit.
18. All decorations must be removed as part of clean-up after the event.
19. All facilities must be returned to the same condition as before the event.
20. Please remind caterers and vendors that all items must be dropped off and picked up **during rental hours**, not before or after.
21. Renter is responsible for communicating facility policies and requirements with vendors they contract with. Falkirk Staff should communicate with only the Renter/Designated Representative.

Reservations may be revoked at any time whenever the use of buildings or facilities may interfere with Department program activities or where there has been a violation of approved regulations. In such circumstances, all monies paid to Falkirk Cultural Center/City of San Rafael will be refunded in full.

The City of San Rafael reserves the right to make any physical or furniture changes to the building as well as update rental policies and fees. Fee changes are not applied to rentals with existing agreements.





Clean-up Requirements Checklist

Falkirk Staff will perform walk through at start and end of rental with this sheet. All renters and vendors must follow this checklist to be eligible for full refund of deposit.

Minimum \$50 FEE for improper waste disposal.

Trash & Recycling Disposal

- ☐ **BROWN BINS= GLASS & PLASTIC ONLY**
- ☐ **BLUE BINS= CARDBOARD & PAPER ONLY**
- ☐ **GREEN BINS= COMPOST**
- ☐ **BLACK & GREY BINS= GARBAGE**

Bags to Use in receptacle:

- No bag
- No bag
- GREEN Bio bag**
- BLACK Bag**

Rented Equipment

- ☐ All rental equipment should be removed/picked up by end of rental.

Kitchen Cleaning

- ☐ Both sinks cleaned.
- ☐ Refrigerator emptied & cleaned of all food particles, spills, etc.
- ☐ Floor swept and clear of major debris and food particles- mop if needed.
- ☐ Oven cleared of all trays, food & food particles.
- ☐ Trash bins emptied & returned to kitchen area. Fresh green & black trash bags in appropriate receptacles.

Interior Spaces & Veranda/Deck

- ☐ Decorations and equipment removed.
- ☐ Tables wiped down and all surfaces cleared of items and clean.
- ☐ Floors cleared of all food particles, debris, and event décor- vacuum if needed.
- ☐ Veranda/Deck cleared, spillage, food particles, debris cleaned or swept up.
- ☐ Final sweep of ALL rooms used: Parlor, Dining, Bridal Suite, restrooms, etc. Clean & no items left behind.
- ☐ Trash bins emptied & returned to kitchen area (where tables and chairs are stored)

Wedding Lawn & Rose Garden

- ☐ Decorations & trash removed.
- ☐ All Falkirk equipment & rented equipment removed from event spaces and stowed neatly.
- ☐ Trash bins emptied & returned to kitchen area (where tables and chairs are stored)

Falkirk Equipment Returned

- ☐ 100 x chairs & 13 x tables returned to storage (kitchen storage areas).
- ☐ Extension cords, easels, signs, etc. returned to Falkirk Staff/put away.

By signing the Rental Application, you confirm you have reviewed and will follow the Falkirk Cultural Center Clean-up Requirements Checklist.



Sample Caterers

Falkirk Cultural Center has no exclusivity with vendors.

<p style="text-align: center;">ALL SEASONS CATERING Stan Vail 201 Seminary Drive, Mill Valley, CA 94941 415-383-9355 allseasonscatering.com</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">D'ANGELO CATERING Mary Wilson 22 Miller Avenue, Mill Valley, CA 94941 415-388-3468 piazadangelo.com</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">DELICIOUS! CATERING Jan Goldberg 26 Medway Road, San Rafael, CA 94901 415-453-3710 deliciouscatering.com</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">FORKS & FINGERS Matt Fuelle/Maryellen Osmer 372 Bel Martin Keys Boulevard, Novato, CA 94949 415-883-1900 forksandfingers.com</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">ANN WALKER CATERING Ann Walker 40 Kensington Road, San Anselmo, CA 94960 415-460-9885 annwalkercatering.com</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">INSALATA'S Chris Engel 120 Sir Francis Drake Blvd., San Anselmo, CA 94960 415-457-7700 or 415-457-8223 insalatas.com</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">CATERMARIN Terry Eberle 936-B Seventh Street #354, Novato, CA 94945 415-892-2777 catermarin.com</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">MANGIA/NOSH Robert Meyer 271 Alameda del Prado, Novato, CA 94949 415-612-4100 jordan@mangianosh.com</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">RAY'S CATERING Roger & Sidra Offenback 118 Hamilton Drive #A, Novato, CA 94949 415-883-4939 info@rayscatering.com</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">COMFORTS TOO Glenn Miwa 335 San Anselmo Ave., San Anselmo, CA 94960 415-454-9840 catering@comfortscape.com</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">SAGE CATERING Scott Anderson 35 Mitchell Boulevard, Ste. 12, San Rafael, CA 94903 415-491-2222 sage-catering.com</p>	



Hotels in Marin	Party Rental Services
Falkirk Cultural Center has no exclusivity with vendors.	
<u>EMBASSY SUITES SAN RAFAEL</u> 101 McInnis Parkway San Rafael, CA 94903 415-499-9222	<u>JRB EVENT SERVICES</u> 1150 Industrial Avenue, Suite J Petaluma, CA 94952 (707) 778-1078 Toll-Free (866) 778-1078 heidi@jrbeventservices.com http://www.jrbeventservices.com/ * No additional charge for Saturday or Sunday pick-up/delivery JRB has mahogany folding chairs that match Falkirk's
<u>FOUR POINTS SHERATON SAN RAFAEL</u> 1010 Northgate Drive San Rafael, CA 94903 415-479-8800 www.fourpointssanrafael.com	
<u>PANAMA HOTEL SAN RAFAEL</u> 4 Bayview Street San Rafael, CA 94901 415-457-3993 www.panamahotel.com	
<u>COURTYARD BY MARRIOTT NOVATO</u> 1400 N. Hamilton Parkway Novato, CA 94949 415-883-8950 www.marriott.com	
<u>CASA MADRONA HOTEL AND SPA SAUSALITO</u> 801 Bridgeway Sausalito, CA 94965 415-332-0502 www.casamadrona.com	
<u>CAVALLO POINT RESORT AND SPA SAUSALITO</u> 601 Murray Circle Sausalito, CA 94965 415-339-4700 www.cavallopoint.com	<u>A PARTY CENTER</u> 824 Francisco Blvd W San Rafael, CA 94901 (415) 456-5970 http://www.apartycenter.net Mon - Fri 8:30 am - 5 pm Sat 9 am - 3 pm
<u>ACQUA HOTEL MILL VALLEY</u> 555 Redwood Highway Mill Valley, CA 94941 415-380-9696 www.marinhotels.com/acqua-hotel/home	<u>HARTMANN STUDIOS</u> 70 West Ohio Avenue, Ste. H Richmond, CA 94804 p. (510) 232-5030 f. (510) 232-1350 sales@hartmannstudios.com Mon – Fri 8:30am - 5:30pm Saturday 9am - 4pm (by appointment only)



History of the Falkirk Cultural Center

1408 Mission Avenue, San Rafael, California, 94901
(415) 485-3328, www.cityofsanrafael.org/falkirk/

Falkirk, a California Victorian, was built in 1888 in the Mission city of San Rafael. An excellent example of the Queen Anne style, it captures the spirit of early California. It has a complex, picturesque roof-line of gables and chimneys, variously shaped bays and decorative details that relate playfully to the different levels as was common of the style. A celebration of country living with seventeen rooms, three floors, and a large porch with oversized turned posts, Falkirk's open floor plan was not common in Victorians. The home and the history of its occupants reflect both the emergence of San Rafael as a fashionable suburb of San Francisco and the growth of rail and shipping industries in the west.

Ella Nichols Park, born in Vermont in 1847, travelled with her parents via the Isthmus of Panama to San Francisco in 1850. Summers were spent at Violet Terrace; a portion of the property includes San Rafael's Gerstle Park. A wealthy and reclusive young widow, she returned to San Rafael in 1882 after the death of her husband, Trenor Park; but it was not until October 1886 that she purchased the 11-acre estate from railroad magnate James D. Walker and had his house removed. In February 1888 she commissioned E. F. Chisholm to build her home, designed by architect Clinton Day. He is best known for the original chapel on the Stanford University campus and the City of Paris Department Store on Union Square in San Francisco. By August of that year this elegant country home was completed for a cost of \$30,000. A devout Presbyterian, Ella donated the land and a matching grant to build the original stone church at Fifth Avenue and E Street.

After Ella's death in 1905, the estate was purchased by Captain Robert Dollar in 1906. Captain Dollar was born in 1844 in Falkirk, Scotland and became very wealthy, first through the timber industry and later in the shipping business. He founded the Dollar Steamship Company, established trade with the Orient, and began the first regularly scheduled round-the-world passenger/freight line. Captain Dollar is often credited with founding the Merchant Marine. Also a devout Presbyterian, Dollar donated the bells and stained-glass windows to the same church. An active member of civic life in San Rafael and one of the drafters of the City Charter, Dollar donated much of the city's adjacent open space on San Rafael Hill. He also gave lavishly to his hometown of Falkirk, Scotland, where he is fondly remembered today. In October 1988 San Rafael and Falkirk became sister cities.

Many alterations occurred during the Dollar years. The rear addition was built to house the family of Dollar's son Harold when they returned from Shanghai, China. Agnes (Mrs. Harold) Dollar then undertook the renovation of the grounds in 1927. The brick steps, pond, and rolling lawns replaced what had once been a Victorian garden. The picnic terrace and garage were also part of this renovation. The newly defined grounds became a showcase for the new wonder and toy of the wealthy – the automobile. A Gatsby garden.

In February 1972, an attempt was made to secure the property from the Dollar family for development. The plans included destruction of the mansion and all out buildings. In December the estate was placed on the National Register of Historic Places and a grassroots citizen's group, Marin Heritage, began a three-year struggle to save the estate for the people of the City of San Rafael. In November 1974 voters approved a 4-cent tax to allow for the purchase and maintenance of the estate. Shortly after the mortgage was paid California State Proposition 13 disallowed the tax, leaving the City to maintain Falkirk Cultural Center from the General Operating Fund. Falkirk now operates as an historic site with tours available upon request. The house and grounds are available for receptions, weddings, and meetings. The center houses a contemporary art gallery and an educational center for cultural arts.

