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— CREATIVE —

SEO Keyword: San Francisco City Hall elopement

Recommended URL Slug: /san-francisco-city-hall-elopement

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Blog Title: Modern San Francisco City Hall Elopement | Anna and Daniel

There's something about a San Francisco City Hall elopement that makes every ceremony feel like something from a dream. I've photographed many elopements here, and every time I walk through those doors I fall in love with the building all over again.

Maybe it's the way the light pours through the towering arched windows. Maybe it's the grand marble staircase that seems to have been built just for a couple to descend hand in hand. Whatever it is, Anna and Daniel's elopement here was one for the books, and I'm so excited to share every detail of it with you.



Anna and Daniel at their San Francisco City Hall Elopement

A Love Story That Started at a Crab Feed

Anna and Daniel met through mutual friends at a crab feed four years ago. Quiet, calm, and completely devoted to each other, they're the kind of couple who doesn't need a lot of fanfare. What they have is easy and real, and it shows in every single frame from their day.

What I love most about their story is the proposal. When they first reached out to me, there hadn't actually been an official one yet, which made what happened next even more special. On New Year's Eve, Daniel took Anna to dinner at Market Tavern, then

for coffee, then on a slow walk along the waterfront at the Marina as the city glittered around them. That's where he got down on one knee. They both cried. One week later, they were married. There's something so romantic about that timeline, and it suits them perfectly.

Anna and Daniel also have a daughter together, and she was very much part of the day. Watching this little family step into a new chapter together made the whole morning feel even more tender and full.



Bride and groom with their daughter

Why They Chose a San Francisco City Hall Elopement

Anna and Daniel were clear from the beginning about what they wanted. A quiet [San Francisco elopement](#). No big reception, no long guest list, no pressure. They invited only the groom's mom and Anna's two closest friends, keeping the circle small and the energy calm. This day was entirely theirs, shaped around what felt right for them.

That intentionality is something I always admire in the couples I work with. When you strip a wedding day back to its most essential parts, what you're left with is just two people choosing each other, and that's a beautiful thing to witness and photograph.



Anna and Daniel standing against columns



The couple with City Hall's architecture in the background

The Morning of the Wedding

Anna and Daniel got ready at their hotel just five minutes from City Hall, then made their way over with their small, beloved group. The morning had a calm, unhurried quality to it that I find so often with elopements.

And then at City Hall, Anna's two friends surprised her with a handmade bouquet and a boutonniere they'd put together themselves. The flowers were lush and thoughtful and so clearly made with love, and Anna's reaction was everything. It's one of those moments that reminds you why intimate weddings are so magical. There's nowhere to hide the emotion. It just spills out, right there in the lobby of [San Francisco City Hall](#).

That bouquet ended up being one of the most talked-about details of the entire day. When the judge officiating their ceremony saw it, she paused to say it had the prettiest flowers she'd seen.



The bride seeing her friend's handmade bouquet



The bride picking up her bouquet from her friend

Waiting in the Hallway

While the group waited in the corridor before the ceremony, Anna and Daniel's daughter was completely in her element. She ran back and forth through the marble hallway with pure, uncontainable joy, her laughter bouncing off the walls and filling the whole space with the best kind of energy.

It's one of my favorite things about photographing at City Hall. The building itself creates a sense of occasion without any effort at all. Even the waiting feels cinematic.



Anna and Daniel smiling with their daughter



The couple and guests waiting for the ceremony to start



The bride and groom waiting in chairs

The San Francisco City Hall Ceremony

The ceremony took place in the Rotunda at the top of the grand staircase, with light pouring in from above and the marble columns framing everything perfectly. Their judge was warm and unhurried, and she clearly loved being there as much as they did. In just a few beautiful minutes, with their daughter watching and their little circle gathered close, Anna and Daniel were married.

It was simple. It was quiet. It was completely and utterly perfect.

I always tell couples that a civil ceremony at City Hall doesn't need embellishment to feel significant. The building does so much of the work for you, and when you add in the people you love most and a surprise bouquet made by your best friends? You don't need anything else.



The bride and groom during the ceremony



Anna and Daniel during the ceremony



The wedding guests at the ceremony



The officiant during the ceremony



The bride and groom kissing

San Francisco City Hall Photo Locations We Love

After the ceremony, we spent time roaming the building together, and this is honestly one of my favorite parts of any City Hall session. While Anna and Daniel moved through the corridors and balconies with me, their daughter and the groom's mom wandered on their own, doing their own exploring. Every few minutes, from somewhere deeper in the building, we'd hear a burst of laughter or a happy squeal echoing through the halls. Their daughter declared that city hall was a "castle."

We hit some of my all-time favorite spots in the building. The Grand Staircase is always the anchor of a City Hall session, and for good reason. The sweep of marble, the towering columns, the dome above it all is genuinely breathtaking, and Anna's lace gown looked absolutely stunning against every inch of it.

The third floor gave us long, dramatic hallways with soft natural light flooding in from the intricate windows, which suited their urban, modern aesthetic perfectly. Looking up at the Rotunda gave us one of those stunning architectural compositions that I never get tired of. And we closed the session outside with the iconic City Hall sign and double doors.

After photos, the two of them headed off to lunch in the city with their little family. No reception to get to, no timeline left to follow. Just newlyweds with the afternoon ahead of them and the rest of their lives just beginning.



Anna and Daniel in black and white



Anna and Daniel with their loved ones



The couple holding hands with their daughter



Anna and Daniel on a staircase



The bride in front of a window



The groom in front of an intricate window



The couple with columns and windows in the background



Bride and groom under the City Hall sign

How to Plan a San Francisco City Hall Elopement

Anna and Daniel's wedding is such a beautiful example of what a City Hall elopement can be. If their day has you dreaming of something similar, here's a quick overview of your ceremony options.

The Civil Ceremony is the most intimate choice and the one Anna and Daniel went with. It allows for a maximum of 6 people total, including your photographer and witnesses. Ceremonies take place in the Rotunda, Monday through Friday. You can book at [SF.gov](https://www.sf.gov).

You'll need your marriage license in hand on the day and at least one witness. An officiant is provided by the city, and the ceremony covers just vows and rings. Vows are set by the city, but some couples choose to share their own words privately before or after, which add a really lovely and personal touch.

The One-Hour Wedding Rental is ideal if you have more than 6 guests or want to personalize your ceremony or have additional time. You can rent the Mayor's Balcony or the Fourth Floor Gallery for \$1,200 Monday through Friday, with capacity for up to 100 guests. Book through sfcityhallevents.org and do it well in advance because these spaces book up quickly for popular dates.

The 2-Hour Weekend Rental gives you the entire building on a Saturday for \$6,000, with the ceremony taking place on the Grand Staircase and room for up to 200 guests. If you've ever pictured yourself getting married on that staircase with everyone watching, this is your option.

For a complete breakdown of everything you need to know before your City Hall wedding day, I've got a full guide about [How to Get Married at San Francisco City Hall](#).



Anna and Daniel with their marriage certificate



San Francisco City Hall architecture

Book Your San Francisco City Hall Elopement Photographer

I'd love nothing more than to be there for your day. Whether you're coming with two witnesses or a small circle of your favorite people, I know this building and I know how to find the light, the quiet corners, and the in-between moments that make a gallery feel like *you*. Anna and Daniel were referred to me by a friend, and that kind of trust means the world to me.

If you're ready to start planning, you can [contact me here](#). I can't wait to hear from you!

Vendors

Venue: [San Francisco City Hall](#)

Wedding dress: [LuLus](#)

Bouquet: DIY by friend

Photographer: [Captured by Aleena Photography](#)