

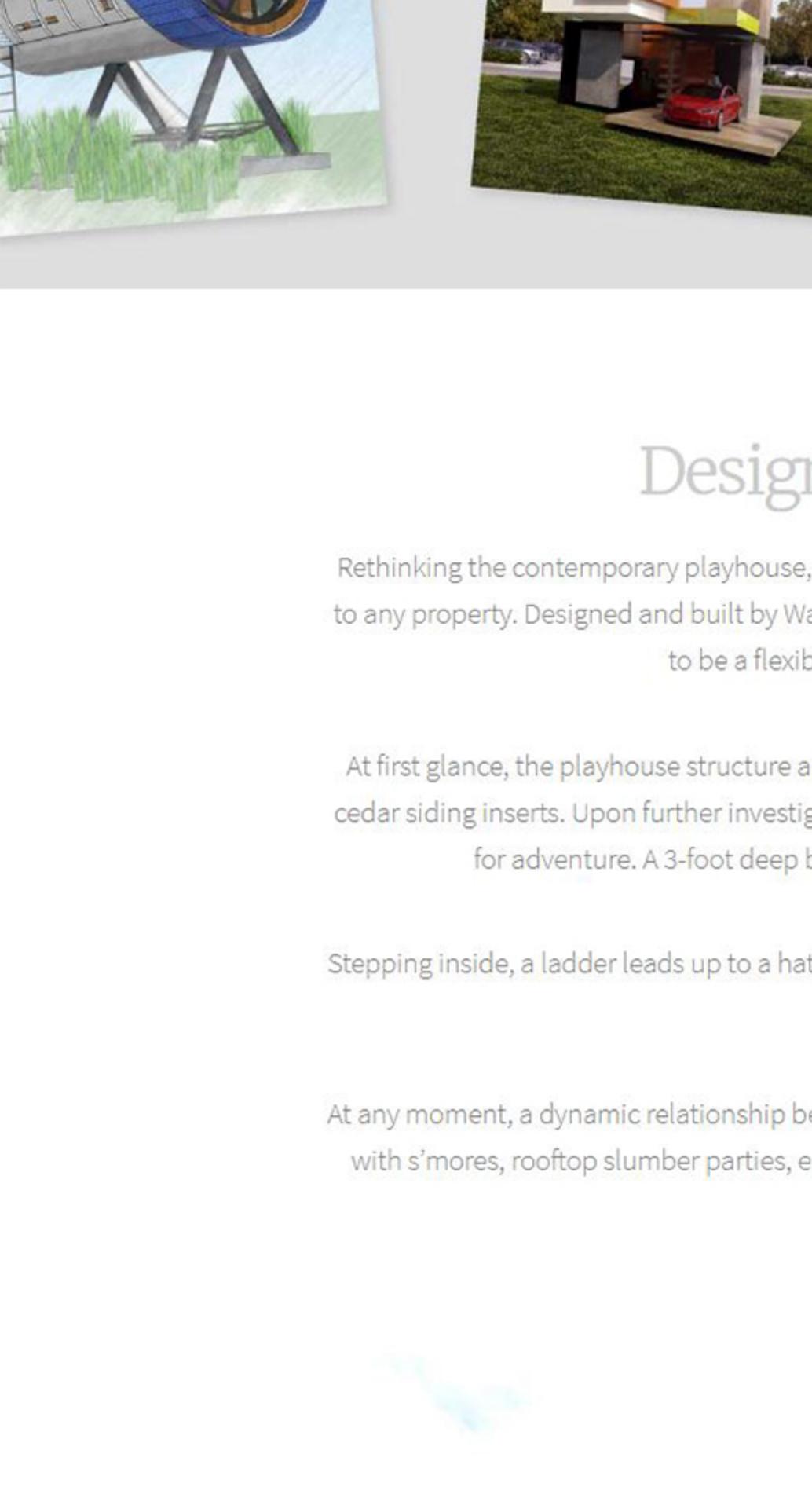
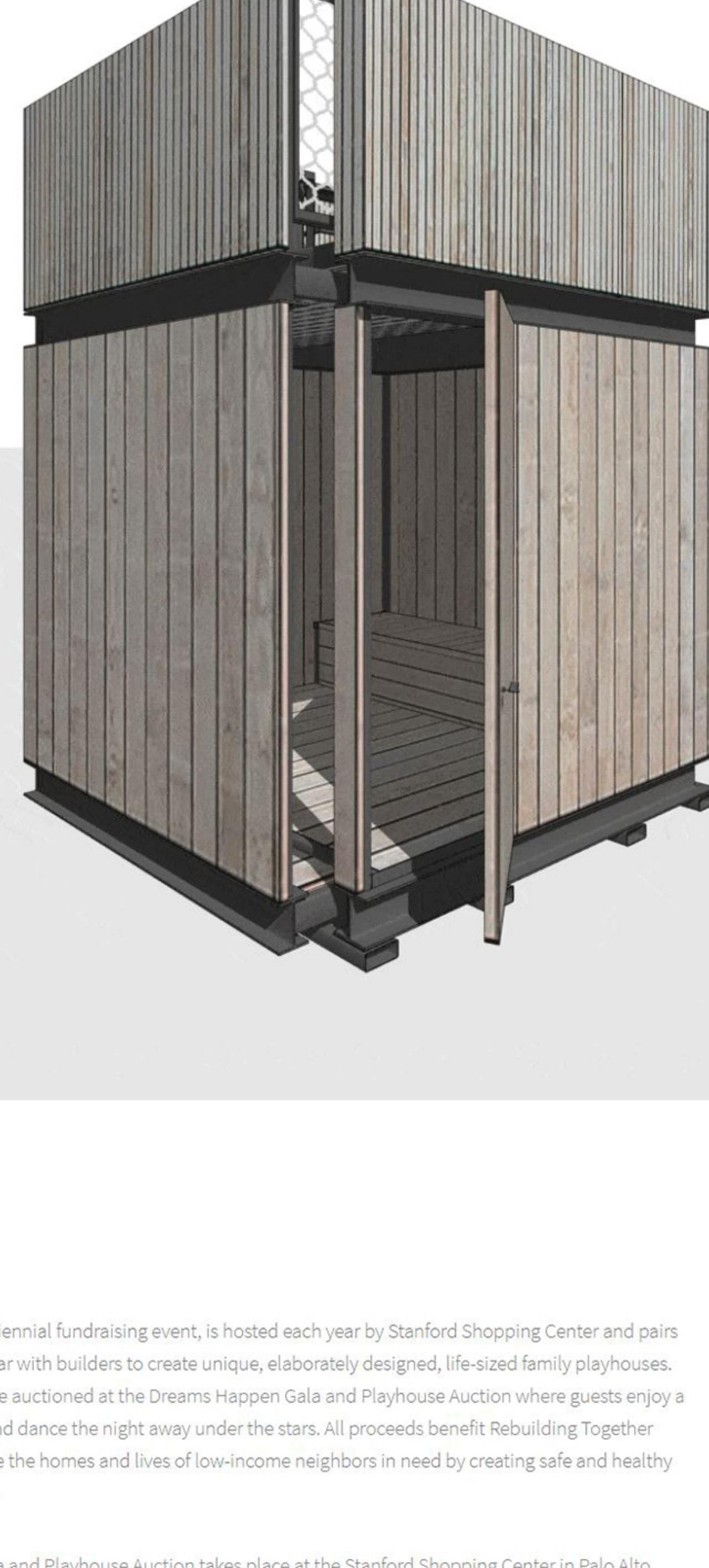
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Dreams Happen

"ON THE BOARDS"

Pairing architects near and far with builders to create unique, elaborately designed, life-sized family playhouses. These playhouses are auctioned at the Dreams Happen Gala and Playhouse Auction where guests enjoy a moonlight supper and dance the night away under the stars. All proceeds benefit Rebuilding Together Peninsula to improve the homes and lives of low-income neighbors in need by creating safe and healthy living environments.

This year, we paired up with Walker Warner Architects and Lencioni Construction to create Push, Pull, Explore — a contemporary playhouse designed and built for occupants of all ages.



About

Dreams Happen, a biennial fundraising event, is hosted each year by Stanford Shopping Center and pairs architects near and far with builders to create unique, elaborately designed, life-sized family playhouses. These playhouses are auctioned at the Dreams Happen Gala and Playhouse Auction where guests enjoy a moonlight supper and dance the night away under the stars. All proceeds benefit Rebuilding Together Peninsula to improve the homes and lives of low-income neighbors in need by creating safe and healthy living environments.

Dreams Happen Gala and Playhouse Auction takes place at the Stanford Shopping Center in Palo Alto, California, one of the Bay Area's premier shopping centers in the U.S. With more than 140 world-class stores, restaurants, and services, Stanford Shopping Center also features award-winning gardens and picturesque sculptures by California artists. Playhouses are displayed at the Center for the entire month of May. During this time, foot traffic at the Center increases by 20%, bringing nearly 1.2 million visitors to the shopping center.

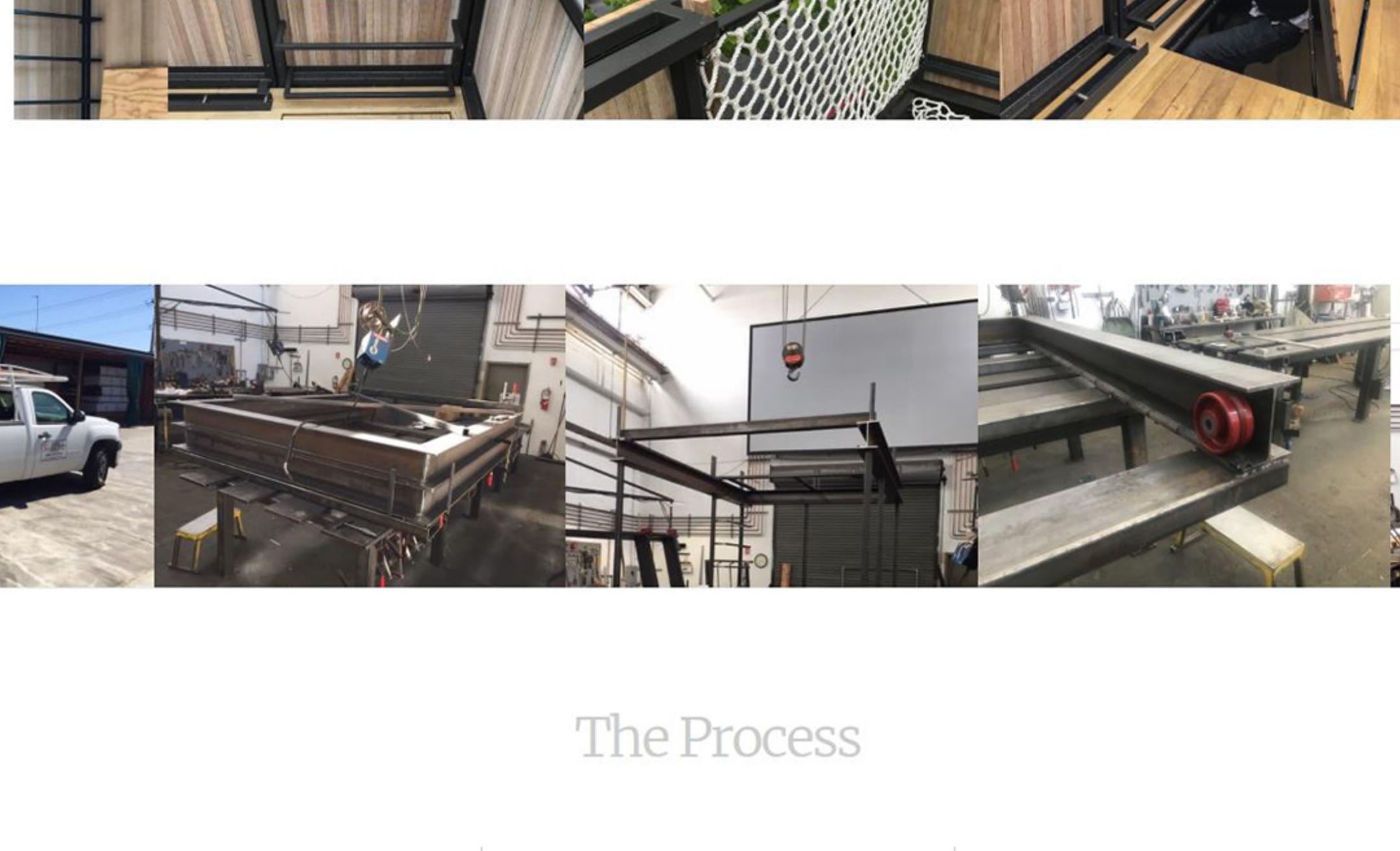
Designing a Contemporary Playhouse

Rethinking the contemporary playhouse, the design team looked for opportunities to create a fun and playful, yet beautiful and versatile addition to any property. Designed and built by Walker Warner Architects, Daedalus Engineering, and Lencioni Construction, Push, Pull, Explore is designed to be a flexible and dynamic space for both children as well as the inner child in all of us.

At first glance, the playhouse structure appears to be an elegantly detailed, yet simple box with painted steel framework and weathered re-sawn cedar siding inserts. Upon further investigation however, the structure can expand to roughly twice its original length, revealing new opportunities for adventure. A 3-foot deep by 8-foot wide storage box will ensure everything is put away at the end of a long, playful day.

Stepping inside, a ladder leads up to a hatch through the roof. The upper level includes a hanging net - the perfect spot to stargaze, sit in privacy, or simply imagine being at the helm of a magnificent ship.

At any moment, a dynamic relationship between user and playhouse can be formed by the spontaneity of the structure's transformation. Summers with s'mores, rooftop slumber parties, endless fun and play – whatever mood you may be in, whichever age group you are, Push, Pull, Explore's only limitation is your imagination.



The Process

Planning

Reaching out to Walker Warner Architects and Lencioni Construction, we were eager to work with a renowned team to design and build an elegant project for a good cause.

Working together as a multi-disciplinary team from the very beginning, we were able to collaborate and capture not only the functionality but also the aesthetics of Walker Warner Architects' clean and refined design.

Design

At any moment, a dynamic relationship between user and playhouse can be formed by the spontaneity of the structure's transformation. A curious pull on the handle expands the platform to almost twice its starting size, unveiling new opportunities for adventure.

Preparation

The dynamic nature of the structure necessitated a high level of engineering creativity in which we particularly excel. Usage of cast-iron wheels, exposed steel, and the ability to remove parapet for transportation and maintenance required careful detailing to facilitate our design team's pedigree of high caliber design.

Build

Lencioni Construction was more than generous with their time and efforts in coordinating construction. The elegant design of the playhouse was brought to life with the help of donors/sponsors invited by Lencioni Construction and Walker Warner Architects.

Transport

Considering the need for portability, the playhouse sits on exposed HSS tubes to allow for easy transport via forklift.

Fin

Push, Pull, Explore is currently on display at the Stanford Shopping Center in front of Pottery Barn until June 1st. On June 1st, the playhouse will be auctioned off to one lucky dream-owner.