A foldout porch structure, for mounting on a building, includes a base platform and a roof. The base platform, when mounted on the building, pivots near a bottom of a side of the building between a stowed position, along the side of the building, and an extended position, outward from the side of the building. The roof, when mounted on the building, pivots near a top of the side of the building between a stowed position, along the side of the building, and an extended position, outward from the side of the building.
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CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application is a continuation-in-part application of application Ser. No. 11/496,753, filed Aug. 1, 2006, which is incorporated herein by reference in its entirety.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] Mobile or semi-permanent structures, such as house trailers, campers, recreational vehicles (RVs), mobile homes, mobile offices, temporary buildings, or other temporary shelter structures or vehicles, are used by people for living or working accommodations at temporary home sites (e.g., at vacation resorts, mobile home parks, campgrounds, etc.), job locations (e.g., construction sites, land development sites, temporary manufacturing sites, etc.), gathering sites (e.g., concert and entertainment venues, bloodmobile and bookmobile locations, etc.) and other places. Often, such structures are not placed on any type of pavement, but rather on a lawn or an undeveloped field or simple dirt-exposed ground. Unlike most permanent structures that people may enter, however, these mobile/semi-permanent/temporarily-placed structures usually do not have an entryway where the people can knock or brush off dirt from their feet or shoes or boots. Consequently, tracking dirt and mud into such structures is often more of a problem than it is for the typical permanently-placed house or office building. Additionally, without a porch, patio or other type of entryway, the ground on which people must step in order to reach the door of such structures is often uneven, rough, unstable, slippery, or otherwise poses a hazard to people coming and going.

[0003] Some RVs and campers, for example, have one or two built-in steps in front of and just below the door, thereby providing some means for people to knock dirt off their shoes and to step up into or down from the door. Such steps, however, are typically very small and flimsy and do not afford a sufficient space for people either to adequately wipe their shoes on or to truly step securely on when entering or exiting the structure.

[0004] A user of a mobile home or mobile office or other structure could build a porch or patio next to it. Then visitors would have a relatively large and stable platform, which provides both ample space within which to wipe their feet or shoes before entering the structure and a sufficiently stable surface to step securely on when exiting or entering the structure. Unfortunately, it can be time-consuming and costly to build such a platform every time the mobile structure is moved to a new location. Alternatively, the platform could be designed and built in pieces (a sort of pre-fabricated kit) that can be disassembled prior to moving the structure and then reassembled upon moving to the new location. In this case, the pieces have to be stored away somewhere, such as inside or on top of the mobile structure, itself, or in a separate trailer taken along with the mobile structure. The storage space, however, may not be adequate, since mobile structures are typically relatively small. Additionally, storage inside the mobile structure may be prohibited by a need to use the mobile structure during transit. Furthermore, the assembly and disassembly times may still be significant. Also, whether built from scratch or assembled from a pre-fab kit, in order to be truly secure and stable, it may be necessary to anchor the platform to the mobile structure, thereby having the potential to damage the mobile structure when the platform doesn’t properly align with the structure.

[0005] A portable porch could be made collapsible or foldable. In this case, a user simply unfolds the porch and sets it next to the door of the mobile structure and then folds it back up and puts it away when it is not in use. As with the pre-fab kit above, the foldable porch has to be stored somewhere when not in use, so the same problems with storage apply to the foldable porch. Moreover, since the porch is folded, rather than disassembled, the whole porch must be light enough for a person to carry and small enough to store in a single space. As a result, the foldable porch may be relatively small and flimsy. It may not be large enough or strong and sturdy enough to handle a relatively high amount of visitor traffic. As with the built-in steps above, therefore, the foldable porch may not afford a sufficient space for people either to adequately wipe their shoes on or to step securely on when entering or exiting the structure.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0006] FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a foldout porch structure (mounted on a building) in an unfolded, extended, useable position in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention.

[0007] FIG. 2 is another perspective view of the foldout porch structure shown in FIG. 1 (mounted on a building) in a folded-up, stowed position according to an embodiment of the present invention.

[0008] FIG. 3 is a side view of the foldout porch structure shown in FIG. 1 (mounted on a building) in the folded-up, stowed position shown in FIG. 2 and showing base supports placed on the ground, according to an embodiment of the present invention.

[0009] FIG. 4 is another side view of the foldout porch structure shown in FIG. 1 (mounted on a building) in a first partially unfolded position, according to an embodiment of the present invention.

[0010] FIG. 5 is another perspective view of the foldout porch structure shown in FIG. 1 (mounted on a building) in the first partially unfolded position shown in FIG. 4, according to an embodiment of the present invention.

[0011] FIG. 6 is another side view of the foldout porch structure shown in FIG. 1, (mounted on a building) in a second partially unfolded position, according to an embodiment of the present invention.

[0012] FIG. 7 is another perspective view of the foldout porch structure shown in FIG. 1 (mounted on a building) in the second partially unfolded position shown in FIG. 6, according to an embodiment of the present invention.

[0013] FIG. 8 is another perspective view of the foldout porch structure shown in FIG. 1 (mounted on a building) in a third partially unfolded position, according to an embodiment of the present invention.

[0014] FIG. 9 is another perspective view of the foldout porch structure shown in FIG. 1 (mounted on a building) in a fourth partially unfolded position, according to an embodiment of the present invention.

[0015] FIG. 10 is a perspective view of an alternative foldout porch structure (mounted on a building) in an unfolded, extended, useable position in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention.

[0016] FIG. 11 is a perspective view of another alternative foldout porch structure (mounted on a building) in an
unfolded, extended, useable position in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0017] A foldout porch (or patio, vestibule, entryway, etc.) structure 100, according to an embodiment of the present invention, is shown semi-permanently mounted at a door 102 on a side 104 of a building 106 in FIGS. 1 and 2. The foldout porch structure 100 preferably includes a base (floor) platform 108 and a roof 110. The base platform 108 is generally for one or more people to stand and walk on and pass through the door 102 when it is in an unfolded, extended, useable position as shown in FIG. 1. The roof 110 generally covers the base platform 108 and is generally for providing shade and protection from weather for the base platform 108 and the people when the roof 110 is in an unfolded, extended, useable position as shown in FIG. 1. In the extended position of FIG. 1, the foldout porch structure 100 provides both ample space within which people can wipe, knock or brush dirt from their feet, shoes or boots before entering the structure and a sufficiently stable surface to step securely on when exiting or entering the building 106. When the base platform 108 and the roof 110, on the other hand, are in their respective stowed positions, as shown in FIG. 2, the roof 110 is pivoted downward and the base platform 108 is pivoted upward, both against the side 104 of the building 106. In this manner, the foldout porch structure 100 is portable (when necessary) and takes up relatively little storage space. Therefore, as further described below, the foldout porch structure 100 provides a relatively stable and relatively large platform that is quick and easy to set up or take down and can handle a relatively high amount of visitor traffic.

[0018] The building 106 may be any suitable structure on which the foldout porch structure 100 can be mounted. In some embodiments, the building 106 is any portable structure, such as house trailers, campers, recreational vehicles (RVs), mobile homes, mobile offices, temporary buildings, or other temporary shelter structures or vehicles. Suitable structures for the building 106 may be used by people for living or working accommodations at temporary home sites (e.g. RV vacation resorts, mobile home parks, camp grounds, etc.), job locations (e.g. construction sites, land development sites, temporary manufacturing sites, etc.), gathering sites (e.g. concert and entertainment venues, bloodmobile and bookmobile locations, etc.) and other places. The foldable nature of the foldout porch structure 100 makes it ideal for use on such portable structures, since, when folded up and stowed away as shown in FIG. 2, the foldout porch structure 100 is relatively easily transported along with the portable structure from place to place. And the relative ease with which the foldout porch structure 100 is set up makes it fairly convenient and quick to do at each place.

[0019] Although the foldout porch structure 100 is considered ideal for use with portable structures, it is understood that the present invention is not necessarily limited to use only with portable structures for the building 106. Instead, the building 106 may be any structure, whether permanent or portable, for which it is desired to have a reasonably-sized and relatively strong porch that can be quickly and easily folded up out of the way. For example, outdoor space may be limited for a given building 106 (e.g. a home with a small backyard), so it may be desirable to have the foldout porch structure 100 in order to convert the space from "porch space" to "open space". In another example, since the foldout porch structure 100 is typically folded up against the door 102, and possibly windows, which may be made partially of glass, the foldout porch structure 100 provides a simple means to secure the door 102 (and windows) against potential damage due to foul weather, such as a hurricane. In this case, the foldout porch structure 100 may be useful on any type of building, regardless of its permanence or portability, where high winds may be expected.

[0020] The base platform 108 and the roof 110 may be made of any appropriate materials, such as, but not limited to, various types of metals, wood and plastics. As an example not intended to limit the scope of the invention, the base platform 108 may have a metal frame 112 supporting wooden floor slats 114 bolted to the frame 112. As a further example not intended to limit the scope of the invention, the roof 110 may have a metal frame 116 supporting one or more sheets of corrugated steel 118 bolted or welded thereto.

[0021] The foldout porch structure 100 may be mounted on the building 106 in any appropriate manner, such as with a variety of studs, hooks, braces, brackets, reinforcing members, latches, etc. As an example not intended to limit the scope of the invention, the base platform 108 is mounted near a bottom of the side 104 of the building 106 with an elongated mounting block 120 and optional studs and reinforcing members (not shown) that not only provide a strong mount for the base platform 108, but may also reinforce the side 104 of the building 106 against rips, tears or breakage due to stresses placed thereon by the base platform 108. In this example, the mounting block 120 runs the length of the adjacent side of the base platform 108 and has one or more hinges (not shown) by which the base platform 108 is attached to the mounting block 120. As a further example not intended to limit the scope of the invention, the roof 110 is mounted near a top of the side 104 of the building 106 with one or more mounting hinges 122 and optional studs and reinforcing members (not shown) along the adjacent side of the roof 110.

[0022] Additionally, since the described embodiment calls for having the roof 110 situated generally between the side 104 of the building 106 and the base platform 108 when in the stowed position, as shown in FIG. 2, the mounting block 120 provides a means for extending the pivot point/fence of the base platform 108 out from the side 104 so as to provide space for the roof 110 in between the base platform 108 and the side 104. The mounting hinges 122, on the other hand, provide a pivot point/line for the roof 110 that is closer to the side 104 than is the pivot point/fence of the base platform 108, so the roof 110 pivots to its stowed position closer to the side 104 than does the base platform 110.

[0023] As an alternative, if it is desired to situate the base platform 108 between the roof 110 and the side 104 when in the stowed position, then the roof 110 may be similarly mounted to the side 104 with a suitable mounting block (similar to mounting block 120) to extend the pivot point/line of the roof 110 out from the side 104 so as to provide space for the base platform 108 in between the roof 110 and the side 104. And the base platform 108 may, therefore, be mounted to the side 104 of the building 106 with one or more mounting hinges (similar to mounting hinges 122). Regardless of which portion (the base platform 108 or the roof 110) is on the outside facing away from the side 104 in the stowed position (e.g. FIG. 2), it is generally preferable to have bolts, brackets or other latching mechanisms (not shown) to hold at least the
outer-most portion with sufficient strength and stability to withstand bouncing, rattling and vibration forces due to wind and/or transportation.

Other alternative devices and techniques for mounting the foldout porch structure 100 at the side 104 of the building 106 may depend on the shape, contours and materials of the side 104. For example, if the shape or materials of the side 104 are not conducive to having the mounting block 120 or the mounting hinges 122 attached thereto, then attachments may be made to the top of the building 106 and the foldout porch structure 100 built onto a frame (not shown) that effectively hangs down over the side 104 when the foldout porch structure 100 is in use and optionally folds up onto the top of the building 106 when stowed away.

According to various embodiments, in addition to the base platform 108 and the roof 110, the foldout porch structure 100 optionally includes one or more rail/fence assemblies/sections 124-130 along at least a portion of the perimeter of the base platform 108, as shown in FIG. 1. The rail sections 124-130 generally fence in at least a portion of the base platform 108. The rail sections 124-130 are generally either "pivoting" (e.g. pivoting rail sections 124 and 126) or "removable" (e.g. removable rail sections 128 and 130).

In some embodiments, the pivoting rail sections 124 and 126 are attached by hinges to an underside of the roof 110, so that they can be pivoted, as described below, down to a substantially vertical position between the roof 110 and the base platform 108 after the roof 110 has been pivoted upward to its extended position. Alternatively, in other embodiments, the pivoting rail sections 124 and 126 can be attached by hinges to a top side of the base platform 108, so that they can be pivoted up to the substantially vertical position between the roof 110 and the base platform 108 after the roof 110 has been pivoted upward to its extended position.

The removable rail sections 128 and 130, on the other hand, may be stored in an appropriate location, such as an undersize of the base platform 108, as shown in FIG. 2, when the foldout porch structure 100 is being transported along with the building 106 or is otherwise not being used. The removable rail sections 128 and 130 can, thus, be removed from their storage location (FIG. 2) and attached to the proper location (FIG. 1) when the foldout porch structure 100 is set up. When stowing the foldout porch structure 100, the removable rail sections 128 and 130 are removed from the foldout porch structure 100, until the foldout porch structure 100 has been folded up to its stowed position, and then the removable rail sections 128 and 130 are returned to their storage location. According to other embodiments, the removable rail sections 128 and 130 may be stored in other locations, including locations separate from the foldout porch structure 100.

According to various embodiments, a suitable set of steps 132 (FIG. 1), or a ramp, may be placed adjacent the foldout porch structure 100 for people to more easily step between the ground and the base platform 108. The steps 132 may be removable and storable at any appropriate location, or the steps 132 may be attached to the base platform 108 and folded up (to a stowed position) or folded out (to a usable extended position) along with the base platform 108 as the base platform 108 is stowed or extended.

To set up the foldout porch structure 100 from its stowed position to its extended position, according to some embodiments, one or more base supports 134 are first placed on the ground 136 in front of the foldout porch structure 100, as shown in FIG. 3. Then the base platform 108, after removing the rail sections 128 and 130 from their storage location (FIGS. 2 and 3), is released from any latching mechanisms (not shown) and pivoted down (arrow A) onto the base supports, as shown in FIG. 4.

The underside of the base platform 108 preferably has brackets (not shown) and reinforcing members (not shown), or other suitable engaging mechanisms (not shown), that engage the tops of the base supports 134 when the base platform 108 is pivoted down (arrow A, FIG. 4, or arrow B, FIG. 5) to its extended position. Therefore, the base supports 134 are placed on the ground 136 in locations that match up with the engaging mechanisms. Additionally, the engaging mechanisms and/or the base supports 134 may have latching devices (not shown) to secure the engaging mechanisms and the base supports 134 together to prevent slippage or movement between them. Furthermore, to accommodate uneven ground, the base supports 134 may be vertically adjustable to ensure proper stability of the base platform 108.

Although the base supports 134 are shown as being separate from the base platform 108, it is understood that the invention is not so limited. Instead, alternative base supports that are permanently (or semi-permanently) attached to the base platform 108 are also within the scope of the present invention. Such alternative base supports, for example, may be attached to the base platform 108 with hinged connections so that the base supports can be appropriately stowed and extended along with the base platform 108.

The roof 110 and the pivoting rail sections 124 and 126 are shown in their stowed positions in FIG. 5, according to an embodiment of the present invention. The pivoting rail sections 124 and 126, as shown in FIG. 5, are drawn in dashed lines since they are behind the roof 110 in this view. Once the base platform 108 is secured in its extended position, as shown in FIG. 5, the person(s) setting up the foldout porch structure 100 can stand on the base platform 108 to set up the roof 110 and the pivoting rail sections 124 and 126. It is for this reason that, according to some embodiments, it is preferable to have the roof 110 between the base platform 108 and the side 104 of the building 106 when stowed (see FIG. 2), so base platform 108 can be extended first in order for the person(s) to have a stable surface to work on when handling the roof 110 and the pivoting rail sections 124 and 126. (In other embodiments, however, the base platform 108 is preferably between the roof 110 and the side 104 of the building 106 when stowed, so the weight of the roof 110 hanging down in front of the base platform 108 can hold both the base platform 108 and the roof 110 in their stowed positions in case any latching mechanisms (not shown) come loose and allow the roof 110 to swing freely.)

According to the embodiment shown, with the base platform 108 secured in its extended position, the roof 110 is released from any latching mechanisms (not shown) that hold it in its stowed position and pivoted (arrow C or arrow D) up to approximately its extended position, as shown in FIGS. 6 and 7. While the roof 110 is held up, the pivoting rail sections 124 and 126 are released (one at a time) from any latching mechanisms (not shown) and pivoted (arrow E and arrow F, respectively) down to about the edge of the base platform 108, as shown in FIGS. 8 and 9.

According to the embodiment shown, the pivoting rail sections 124 and 126 generally have at least one support pole 138, horizontal rail members 140, vertical fence members 142, and a railing support member 144 (not visible for rail
section 126). The fence members 142 are attached to the rail members 140. The rail members 140 are attached to the support pole 138 and the railing support member 144. Pivot ends of the support pole 138 and the railing support member 144 are attached to the roof 110. The railing support member 144 may or may not extend to the base platform 108. The support pole 138 (and optionally the railing support member 144) of each rail section 124 and 126 serves not only to hold up the rail members 140 and the fence members 142, but also to hold up the roof 110 supported on the base platform 108.

(Alternatively, support poles that are not part of any of the rail sections 124-130 may be used to hold up the roof 110, with or without railings.) When the rail sections 124 and 126 are pivoted down, an appropriate latching mechanism 146 (FIGS. 8 and 9) may be used to secure the distal ends of the support poles 138 to the base platform 108.

[0035] Additionally, according to the embodiment shown (FIG. 1), the removable rail sections 128 and 130 generally have at least one railing support member 148, horizontal rail members 140 and vertical fence members 142. The fence members 142 are attached to the rail members 140. The rail members 140 are attached to the railing support members 148. The railing support members 148 hold up the rail members 140 and the fence members 142. However, according to various embodiments, the railing support members 148 may or may not extend all the way between the base platform 108 and the roof 110, and may or may not extend up to hold up the roof 110 supported on the base platform 108. Thus, the railing support members 148 are attached by any appropriate means (not shown) to the base platform 108 and/or to the roof 110.

[0036] According to some alternative embodiments, since the distance between the mounting block 120 and the mounting hinges 122 (i.e., the height of the roof 110 over the base platform 108) may be different for different buildings 106, the support poles 138 may have an adjustable height. In this case, one such component can be used with almost any mounting configuration for the roof 110 and the base platform 108.

[0037] Additionally, although the foldout porch structure 100 is shown and described such that the side rail sections 124 and 126 are pivoting and the front rail sections 128 and 130 are removable, it is understood that the invention is not so limited. Instead, any of the rail sections 124-130 may be pivoting and/or of any of them may be removable. Furthermore, the foldout porch structure 100 may have any number (zero or more) of pivoting and/or removable rail sections having any appropriate design, configuration and placement.

[0038] Furthermore, alternative embodiments may incorporate alternative ways of pivoting the rail sections 124 and 126. If the pivot ends of the rail sections 124 and 126 are attached to the roof 110, as shown, they are easy to pivot downward, but add weight to the roof 110, potentially making the roof 110 difficult to lift. On the other hand, if the pivot ends of the rail sections 124 and 126 are attached to the base platform 108, they relieve the weight from the roof 110, so the roof 110 is easier to lift. However, in this case, the rail sections 124 and 126 could potentially get in the way when a person is standing on the base platform 108 while trying to raise the roof 110. Therefore, if the pivot ends of the rail sections 124 and 126 are attached to the base platform 108, then the rail sections 124 and 126 should be pivoted up and then out of the way (e.g., until their top ends rest on the ground) before the roof 110 is raised, so the person can stand comfortably on the base platform 108 while raising the roof 110. Then the rail sections 124 and 126 can be pivoted back up to be positioned between the roof 110 and the base platform 108.

[0039] Other devices or methods for supporting the roof 110 may be employed. In other embodiments, for example, the roof 110 may be cantilevered from or braced against the side 104 of the building 106. In this case, the positional relationship between the roof 110 and the base platform 108 is not a consideration. As another example, the roof 110 may be supported by a pole or column (pivoting or removable) that rests, not on the base platform 108, but directly on the ground below. In this case, the support column for the roof 110 could be placed outside the outer perimeter of the base platform 108 or could pass through the base platform 108 to reach the ground. Additionally in this case, the support column for the roof 110 could also support the base platform 108, either in addition to or instead of the base supports 134 (FIGS. 3, 4 and 6).

[0040] After the roof 110 and any pivoting rail sections (e.g. 124 and 126) have been set up, any removable rail sections (e.g. 128 and 130) are attached as appropriate. Additionally, at any appropriate point in the set-up processes described herein, the steps 132 (or other suitable device) are placed adjacent the base platform 108. The set-up of the foldout porch structure 100, according to the embodiment shown in FIG. 1, is thus complete.

[0041] FIG. 10 shows an alternative embodiment for a foldout porch structure 150. In this embodiment, the foldout porch structure 150 has a set of steps 152 adjacent to the entire length of the front of the base platform 108 and no front rail sections. Other components of the alternative foldout porch structure 150 are similar to those discussed above that have the same reference numbers.

[0042] FIG. 11 shows another alternative embodiment for a foldout porch structure 154 that incorporates a variety of optional features that are within the scope of the present invention. For instance, the foldout porch structure 154 has a set of steps 156 adjacent to one of the sides, instead of the front, of the base platform 108. Also, any of the rail sections 124-130 may be constructed with an optional screen or netting 158 (with any appropriate pitch between wires) to keep out mosquitoes, rodents or other pests. Additionally, an optional gate 160 (or doorway) may be included adjacent or between any of the rail sections 124-130 where a person is intended to step off of or onto the base platform 108. In addition to the foregoing, optional roof perimeter extensions 162 (e.g. shells, plates, trim, sun-screens, shields or other devices) extend a few inches vertically downward, horizontally outward or angled downward and outward from portions of the perimeter of the roof 110. The optional extensions 162 provide protection from sun, wind or precipitation in addition to that provided by the roof 110 alone and may enhance the aesthetic design of the foldout porch structure 154. The extensions 162 may be made of any appropriate material, e.g. metal, plastic, vinyl, cloth, wood, etc. The extensions 154 may also be opaque, translucent or transparent, as desired. Furthermore, the extensions 162 may be permanently or removable attached to the roof 110, the rail sections 124-130 or both. As an example, the extensions 162 may be attached by hinges (not shown) to the edge of the roof 110, such that the extensions 162 can be pivoted onto the top side (or bottom side) of the roof 110 when stowed away. Other components of the alternative foldout porch structure 154 are similar to those discussed above that have the same reference numbers or similar appearance.
Additional embodiments within the scope of the present invention will be readily apparent. For instance, a “skirt” may be positioned to cover the space between the base platform 108 and the ground to eliminate an unsightly view and/or to keep animals from crawling under the base platform 108. Furthermore, some of the above-described components may be designed with ornamental features for a visually pleasing effect. Also, some of the above-described features may be used in any appropriate combination. In addition, two or more of the foldout porch structures 100, 150 or 154, having any appropriate combination of features may be attached next to each other at the side 104 of the building 106 to effectively form a larger, longer porch.

The invention claimed is:

1. A foldout porch structure, for mounting on a building, comprising:
   a base platform that, when mounted on the building, pivots near a bottom of a side of the building between a stowed position, along the side of the building, and an extended position, outward from the side of the building; and
   a roof that, when mounted on the building, pivots near a top of the side of the building between a stowed position, along the side of the building, and an extended position, outward from the side of the building.

2. The foldout porch structure of claim 1, wherein:
   when the base platform and the roof are in their respective stowed positions, the roof is situated between the side of the building and the base platform.

3. The foldout porch structure of claim 1, wherein:
   the base platform and the roof are situated relative to each other in a manner that, after a person pivots the base platform to its extended position, the person may stand on the base platform while pivoting the roof to its extended position.

4. The foldout porch structure of claim 1, further comprising:
   a mounting block attached to the base platform and which, when mounted on the building, extends a pivot point of the base platform out from the side of the building.

5. The foldout porch structure of claim 1, further comprising:
   a pivoting rail section attached to the roof and that pivots down from the roof.

6. The foldout porch structure of claim 5, wherein:
   the pivoting rail section includes a support that holds the roof in its extended position.

7. The foldout porch structure of claim 1, further comprising:
   at least one removable rail section attached along at least a portion of a perimeter of the base platform.

8. A method of manipulating a foldout porch structure mounted on a building, comprising:
   pivoting a base platform from a stowed position along a side of the building to an extended position at which a person can stand on the base platform; and
   pivoting a roof from a stowed position along the side of the building to an extended position covering at least a portion of the base platform.

9. The method of claim 8, wherein:
   when the base platform and the roof are in their respective stowed positions, the roof is situated between the base platform and the side of the building.

10. The method of claim 8, wherein:
    when the base platform is at its extended position, the person can stand on the base platform to pivot the roof to its extended position.

11. The method of claim 8, further comprising:
    pivoting at least one rail section into a position between the base platform and the roof.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein:
    the rail section includes a support pole; and
    the method further comprises supporting the roof above the base platform with the support pole.

13. The method of claim 8, further comprising:
    attaching at least one rail section along at least a portion of a perimeter of the base platform.

14. A foldout porch structure, for mounting on a building, comprising:
   a means for standing on by a person;
   a means for covering at least a portion of the standing-on means;
   a means, mountable on the building, for pivoting the standing-on means between a stowed position along a side of the building and a position at which it can be stood upon by the person; and
   a means, mountable on the building, for pivoting the covering means between a stowed position along the side of the building and a position at which it covers at least a portion of the standing-on means.

15. The foldout porch structure of claim 14, wherein:
   when the standing-on means and the covering means are in their respective stowed positions, the covering means is situated between the standing-on means and the side of the building.

16. The foldout porch structure of claim 14, wherein:
   when the standing-on means is in the position at which it can be stood upon by the person, the person can stand on the standing-on means while pivoting the covering means to its position at which it covers at least a portion of the standing-on means.

17. The foldout porch structure of claim 14, wherein:
   the means for pivoting the standing-on means, when mounted on the building, extends a pivot point of the standing-on means out from the side of the building.

18. The foldout porch structure of claim 14, further comprising:
   a means for fencing in at least a portion of the standing-on means; and
   a means for pivoting the fencing-in means to a position between the standing-on means and the covering means.

19. The foldout porch structure of claim 18, wherein:
    fencing-in means includes a means for supporting the covering means above the standing-on means.

20. The foldout porch structure of claim 14, further comprising:
   a means for fencing in at least a portion of the standing-on means, the fencing-in means being attachable to and detachable from a position along a portion of a perimeter of the standing-on means.

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