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Portola Community Center

ARCH 100D, Fourth Year Studio
Instructor: Dan Spiegel

In this studio entitled "How To Almost Disappear, Completely," we were prompted to consider a metaphorical term of disappearance as a basis for designing a community center on a derelict greenhouse site in the Portola Garden District of San Francisco. I was drawn to the idea of decay by thinking about how a building can blend into its context and age throughout time. At the highest point of the site, what starts as solid, both formally and programmatically, begins to tumble and crack as it moves down the topography. As this massing approaches the main street entrance, it dissolves into an expansive unprogrammed space. Upon this massing, the pre-existing greenhouse form sits like a translucent cloud of camouflage, providing space for gardening and hiding the programmed space below, as if the new building was there all along.

