Located at the threshold between a dense residential neighborhood and large industrial buildings, our design explores the possibilities of sharing space with the surrounding community, offering a radical alternative to the conception of a monastery as an introvert, fortress-like structure and appropriately expressing the Capuchins’ non-cloistered life focused on social engagement. A concrete plinth occupies the entire property and negotiates the steep slope of the existing topography, creating a publicly accessible podium with a vegetated roof plane that covers the plinth and folds down to transform into a green façade system along Bruce Street. Four courtyards cut into the plinth provide natural light and private outdoor access to the soup kitchen, health clinic, and homeless shelter housed within the plinth. The friary is a courtyard building lifted off the ground plane, allowing people to pass beneath it and enjoy the ample green space and views of the Menomonee Valley and the monumental grain silos just north of the site. The church is the only object that rests directly on the plinth, its volume seemingly slipping past the friary to form a cloister, one that is open to the public and provides the main access to the sanctuary.
left: floor plans
vegetated podium

opposite: exploded axonometric
site plans