The urban friary bordering Milwaukee's Walker's Point and Menomonee Valley neighborhoods is conceived as intertwining wood and concrete forms wrapping three sides of the site to enclose a centralized garden. The site remains open at the northern end, with rows of low fruit trees forming a thick border between interior and exterior worlds. The orchard space also serves as a link in a conceptual chain of vegetated zones, connecting the highly cultivated garden of the friary with the native wetlands of the Menomonee Valley, whose restoration is currently underway. The striated concrete plinth establishes the boundaries of the built form, mediates the sloping ground condition, and references the unapologetic pragmatism of the industrial buildings dotting the valley to the north. The concrete plinth folds up at the northeast corner to form the bell tower and church frontispiece. The wood volume sits atop the plinth, loosely mirroring its path while at times digging into and carving away at the concrete base to create spaces of spiritual significance—the church, the cloister, the crypt. This wood form is clad in vertical boards and fins that create a rhythm of shadows and openings across the façade, adding material warmth and an architectonic scale that befits the residential neighborhood to the south.
left:
analytical site diagrams
site model
opposite:
church
opposite:
baptismal font and altar

from left:
roof plan
floor plan
cloister model
crypt
opposite:
church
from left:
wall section
facade study
bell tower model
left:
section through church
section model

opposite:
church
left: building section
facade studies

opposite: site model