

Methods in Historical Archaeology

Architectural History 385

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Project 3: Space Syntax Analysis of Gentry House Plans

1. Tips.

- Try to be as explicit as possible about the models and assumptions that inform your analysis and the ways in which you think the models are linked to variation in house plans.
- When you draw on models or data from the reading, cite their source.
- Makes sure your figures have numbers (*e.g.* Figure 1) and labels, so there is no ambiguity about what they portray.

2. Historical questions.

- How do the plans from the English pattern books and from the Chesapeake fit into the long-term trends in gentry housing outlined by West and Wenger?
- Do West's characterizations of the 17th and 18th-century planning conventions hold up to quantitative scrutiny?
- How do the Chesapeake plans compare to the pattern book plans -- to what extent were Chesapeake planners selective in their use of European sources? What characteristics did they favor? Did they only use a limited range of the variation present in the pattern books? Why?
- To what extent can the Chesapeake plans be explained as architectural strategies engineered by slave owners to handle interactions with enslaved domestics? Were those strategies different from the ones used by late-17th and 18th-century English gentry, as exemplified in the pattern books.
- Is there any evidence for change in Chesapeake gentry strategies during the 18th century?
- Wenger sketches -- in an impressionistic fashion -- changes in room arrangement and use in the Chesapeake over the 18th century. Do the plans in our sample support his claims?

3. Models

- Segregation: design features that minimize interaction between servants and owners, and their space-syntax correlates.
- Surveillance: design features that maximize the frequency with which owners can observe access to rooms, and their space-syntax correlates.

4. Data

- Space syntax measures for three groups of pattern book plans (Gibbs, Mills) and for a sample of Chesapeake gentry houses: number of rooms, number of stairs, number of rings, relative ringiness, means and standard deviations in connectivity, control, depth, relative asymmetry,