

Location

- Hardwick Hall is in **Derbyshire**, England
- Built on the estate where **Bess of Hardwick** was born and raised, next to her childhood home, Hardwick Old Hall
- Situated in the Derbyshire countryside, it showcases **materials** and **craftsmanship** from the surrounding region



Structure

- ▶ The Hall is noted for its striking **symmetry**, with balanced design on all four sides
- ▶ Features **three main floors**: the ground floor for servants, the first floor for Bess, and the top floor with large rooms for potential royal guests
- ▶ Known for "more glass than wall," with **extensive windows** and **internal chimney flues** to maintain the external glass effect

Bess of Hardwick (Elizabeth, Countess of Shrewsbury)

Wealthy widow and builder of Hardwick Hall

People Connected with the Site

Robert Smythson
Architect and stonemason, responsible for the Hall's design, emphasizing glass and symmetry

Function

- Hardwick Hall was built as a grand residence for Bess of Hardwick, showcasing her **wealth** and **status**
- Designed for **social gatherings** and to impress **high-ranking guests**
- Its layout reflects **Elizabethan social hierarchy**, with distinct floors for servants, family, and important visitors

George Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury

Bess's fourth husband, one of England's wealthiest men, who brought her wealth and influence but whose relationship with Bess deteriorated

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT: HARDWICK HALL



Legacy and Historical Importance

- Hardwick Hall is one of the best examples of **Elizabethan architecture**, particularly in its use of glass and symmetry
- It showcases Bess of Hardwick's **influence** and **wealth**, as well as her role as a powerful and independent figure of her time
- The Hall **set a new standard** in Elizabethan architectural style, combining luxury with regional pride and self-sufficiency

The Hall's design reflects Elizabethan ideals of **symmetry** and **order**, emphasizing a balanced, structured appearance

Notable for large, impressive glass windows, a **status symbol** of wealth

Design

Built from local materials like wood, stone, iron, and glass from Bess's own properties, showcasing her **economic independence** and **local pride**



Key Events/Developments

- Hardwick Hall was built shortly after Bess's estranged husband, the **Earl of Shrewsbury**, died, allowing her to return to her birthplace
- The Hall's design reflects the trend among Elizabethan nobility to build **grand, private estates** showcasing their status
- Bess's investment in **local materials** and craftsmanship supported regional industries and highlighted the growing **domestic economy**

Cultural Values and Fashions of the Era

- Glass was a **luxury material** in Elizabethan England, symbolizing wealth and refinement
- The Hall's symmetry reflects Elizabethan ideas of **balance** and the **social order**
- Using materials from her own estates aligns with the Elizabethan ideal of **noble self-sufficiency** and support of local industries

