

SHOWPLACE

A curved roof caps a new exhibit hall filled with home accents and furniture in High Point, N.C. It's been designed with the needs of the home décor buyer in mind.

By Guy Adamson

A building filled with home furnishings should be as stylish as the furniture and accessories themselves. After all, the buyers of these products value and appreciate design, color, shape and texture.

A new building in downtown High Point, N.C., lives up to this proposition. Called *Showplace*, the nearly 500,000-square-foot structure has sweeping steel beams, massive windows and a cathedral-like atrium. Its design makes it unlike any other building in the city.

Kevin Johnson, president of the High Point Economic Development Corp. calls *Showplace* "the most unique building in the area. It's certainly a monument to the vision of the *Showplace* team."

Joanna Easter, a managing partner of *Showplace*, says the main purpose of the showroom building is to

offer home décor and furniture buyers a pleasant and easy shopping experience.

"We knew we didn't want a windowless box without any design elements in downtown High Point," she says.

Architects Hyndman & Hyndman designed a building for the intersection of Commerce Avenue and Wrenn Street that is anything but boxy and windowless.

"I can't imagine a buyer coming into this building who didn't want to see every inch of space," says Joanna Easter of Showplace.

"The contemporary design is a dramatic break, with its rectilinear surroundings, with dynamic curves and contrasting forms," says Shelly Hyndman of the architectural firm based in the San Diego suburb of Cardiff.

Buyers enter under a massive portico into a bright and airy 108-foot-

tall atrium. The atrium is the focal point of the structure as well as the reference point for navigating the building.

Pat Walters, co-managing partner, reiterates the fact that *Showplace*, due to its design, simplifies the leasing and marketing by providing exhibitors high visibility. The corridors make it easy for buyers to find showrooms.

The east side of *Showplace* has four floors of showrooms while the west side has five. The elevators and escalators are located at the back of the hall.

The atrium has a full restaurant as well as a registration area and coat check facilities. Each floor has a café serving beverages and snacks. There is ample seating to allow visitors to eat lunch. Benches, inside and out, give buyers a place to rest between appointments. The third, fourth and fifth-floor balconies, totaling 20,000

