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New green space opens by 30th Street Station

Over 200 locals attended the opening celebration, which also hosted jugglers and tightrope walkers

By DIANA GONIMAH · November 2, 2011, 10:22 pm



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Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter, a Penn alumnus, cuts a ceremonial ribbon at The Porch at 30th Street Station on Wednesday.

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GALLERY

[Photos of the opening of 'The Porch at 30th Street Station'](#)

A circus act composed of jugglers and tightrope walkers greeted over 200 locals early Wednesday afternoon at the opening celebration of the [new green space adjacent to 30th Street Station](#).

The West Philadelphia Orchestra and The Give and Take Jugglers entertained the audience as they came to see the transformation of a formerly congested parking lane into what Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter, a 1979 Wharton graduate, described as “a fine example of public service.”

Executive Director of the University City District Matt Bergheiser introduced several officials before unconventionally revealing the name of this new public place: he directed the audience to a tightrope walker who climbed onto a rope and unveiled a banner which read “The Porch at 30th Street Station.”

An independent jury combined different name suggestions into one after a naming contest garnered over 500 responses.

Bergheiser said this name was “welcoming, low-key and unpretentious,” therefore reflecting the true spirit of the city.

GALLERY: [Photos of the opening of 'The Porch at 30th Street Station'](#)

Nutter delivered the concluding speech in the ceremony saying he had been “waiting for this his entire life.” He commended the public and private entities which partook in The Porch’s realization, including Drexel University and Penn — with a personal thank you for Penn President [Amy Gutmann](#) — and numerous other city organizations including the William Penn Foundation.

Nutter said he believes this project exemplifies what “an investment in our streetscape” can do for the Philadelphia community. “This is infrastructure,” he said, adding that thousands will use the new space. “Here in Philadelphia, we know how to get things done.”

“We need less politics ... and more productivity,” he added.

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Babette Pace, House Manager at the Annenberg Center for Performing Arts, was excited to see that the space had outdoor seating, but "would like to see more stationary rather than seasonal, removable objects. Will these chairs still be around when it rains or snows?"

UCD Director of Planning and Economic Development Prema Gupta said she does not believe the weather will be a problem, as this space was essentially inspired by Bryant Park in New York. She explained that the mobility of the chairs demonstrates how this area is open to "flexibility, experimentation and even yoga."

Philadelphia locals Betty Loev and Betty O'Malley are pleased to have a new space to relax between their commute to and from University City and North Philadelphia. Loev added that "now people will be enticed to walk across the bridge and take a look."

Students from Drexel's Recreational Center led a hip-hop and yoga class at the celebration. Ari Melman, a Drexel junior, was happy to see this formerly "empty and aggravating two-foot strip of land transform into a useful public space."

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Yeah, I commented too. I wrote this.

The name, The Porch, is too domestic. Americans associate this with front porches attached to a home. The name, unfortunately doesn't echo the excitement that this venue will bring. Not too much happens on a porch. They're usually small as well. I'm sad that the name doesn't offer reference to Philadelphia. It's rather generic.

Also, there are two restaurants named, The Porch, within this vicinity.

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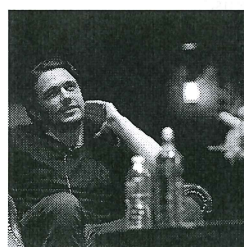
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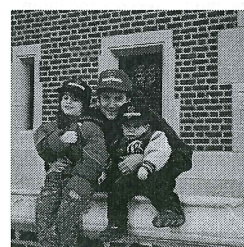
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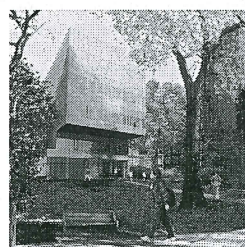
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