

MARKET AT THE WILBUR OPENS IN LITITZ IN PLACE OF HISTORIC WILBUR CHOCOLATE FACTORY

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By Keri Snyder '20

On August 29, 2019, the Market at the Wilbur had its grand opening. The market went in the historic building that was once the Wilbur Chocolate factory.

Located on N. Broad Street beside the Lititz Springs Park, the Market at the Wilbur now has six different vendors: Waltz Vineyards, Oola Bowls, Whiff Roasters, Zig's Bakery & Cafe, Presto Scratch Pasteria, and Rooster Street Butcher. There are plans to build further with the addition of apartments, condominiums, and a hotel.

Lititz resident Jayna Class '21 says she was "very upset when it (the Wilbur Chocolate factory) closed because it added so much character to the town." Class also "always loved that you could smell the chocolate as you left school. It was something that was extremely unique to our little town." Class adds, "despite being upset that it's closed, I think it's awesome that the space is getting repurposed. I'm excited for the new things to come, but I completely understand why people would be upset about it changing. This (the Wilbur Chocolate factory) was a main attraction to our town that has stood there for years."

Lititz resident Sam Machin '20 says her family "moved to Lititz for its small-town charm. The Wilbur Chocolate factory was one of the first places we checked out when we moved. Being an absolute lover of chocolate, I fell in love with the factory, the smell it brought to the town, and all the smiles from customers walking in and out." Machin adds, "It (Lititz) is slowly becoming more commercially developed. In all honesty, it is disappointing to me. Being that it was such a historic building, I hated to see the factory go. In part, I guess I am thankful that it wasn't knocked down for solely housing. I am thankful that the market opening allowed town members and others outside of town to come in and connect with others."

Tomato Pie Cafe is located across the street from the Market at the Wilbur. Chloe Bomberger, one of the managers at Tomato Pie Cafe, says "I do not think we have lost business and I don't anticipate it happening, with the seasons changing now we tend to get slower anyway." Bomberger adds, "I think people come to Lititz just to see the town as a whole rather than just the one shop or the one cafe. We have people who come in all the time just because they want to check it out and look at the menu and everything."

Being the only Wilbur Chocolate factory left in existence, there was quite an uproar when it shut down in January 2016. A Wilbur Chocolate store has been built across the street from the factory, but it is not the same. Lititz is slowly becoming more commercialized, and there are mixed emotions about it.