



28.04.26

To: Chair and Members of the Toronto and East York Community Council

Re: Agenda Item 32.11 (Proposed Redevelopment, 23 Toronto St.)

Shadow Impacts on St. James Cathedral

The Plan for the St. Lawrence Heritage Conservation District includes a policy limiting new shadow impacts on St. James Cathedral. Because *limit* is not a defined term in the Plan, a question arises when a proposed development will shadow the Cathedral: is the shadow limited enough for conformity with the Plan? In the case of 23 Toronto St. the applicant has retained ERA Architects Ltd. to provide an opinion. Based on shadow studies developed by SvN Architects + Planners – another firm retained by the applicant – ERA’s opinion is that the impact will indeed be limited enough. However, as will be noted in this communication, SvN’s shadow studies exclude a major portion of the proposed tower’s shadow impact; thus, ERA’s opinion is based on incomplete information.

Appended to this communication are five pages (plus the title page) excerpted from the most recent shadow study developed by SvN. At 15-minute intervals they show predicted shadows on the Cathedral’s west elevation beginning at 4:18 pm June 21.¹ Shadows cast by the proposed

¹ “23 Toronto St. Shadows on St. James Cathedral – West Elevation Study” (March 17, 2026), posted on the City’s Application Information Centre. Not included here are pages from the study with zero impact on the Cathedral due to the proposed 23 Toronto St. tower – i.e. shadows at earlier times on June 21 and shadows on different dates (March 21 and September 21).

tower at 23 Toronto St. are shown in bronze while shadows cast by the proposed tower at 15 Toronto St. (a project approved by City Council last October) are shown in blue. The first appearance of a bronze shadow is at 4:33 pm; its impact is limited to a small structure attached to the Cathedral's north end. By 6:18 pm, when the study ends, the bronze shadow's leading edge is close to the spire while its trailing edge has reached the chancel. At that point most of the Cathedral is shadowed by the proposed tower at 23 Toronto St.

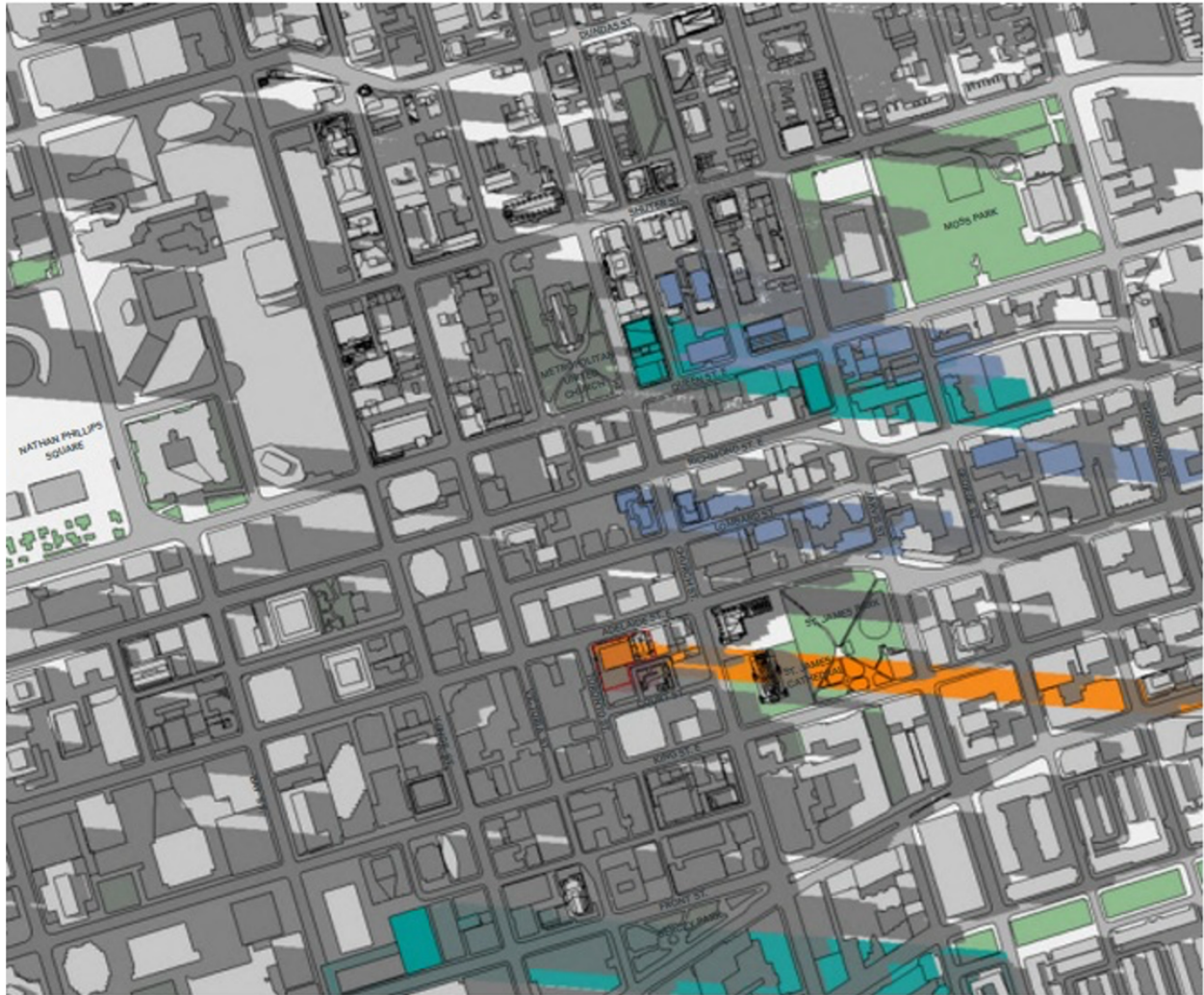
A key question is prompted: why does the study end at 6:18 pm? The HCD Plan's shadow policy is not restricted to times before 6:18 pm so there is no apparent reason to stop then. As the photo on page 5 shows, the Cathedral is essentially in full sunlight at 7:12 pm on June 23 – i.e. about an hour past 6:18 pm and on a day close to June 21. How much of the sunlit hour seen past 6:18 pm on June 21 will be lost if the proposed tower is built is unknown – but knowable if post-6:18 impacts are added to the SvN study.

That being noted, the result of adding post-6:18 pm impacts is foreseeable to a degree: *i.e. the 23 Toronto St. shadow will have reached the top of the spire by 6:33 pm² and will stay there while the shadow's trailing edge moves southward. Eventually the trailing edge will move far enough to clear the Cathedral. When that will occur is the key result attainable by adding post-6:18 impacts to the SvN model.*

The reality of late-June evening sunlight on the Cathedral is remarkable. It has likely been uninterrupted since the Cathedral was built more than 150 years ago. If impairment of this reality will be caused by a City Council decision, the impairment's full extent should be revealed to Councillors and the public at large.

² A similar Cathedral shadow study was created by BDP Quadrangle Architects to support the 15 Toronto St. application. Like the SvN study, it modeled shadows cast on the west elevation by both Toronto Street towers at 15-minute intervals ending at 6:18 pm. At any given time, BDP Quadrangle's shadows are slightly to the south of SvN's. BDP Quadrangle's 23 Toronto Street shadow is on the spire by 6:18, extending almost to the top.

Gauging that full extent means recognizing that evening sunlight on the Cathedral begins well before June 21 and ends well after that date. SvN has released shadow studies for May 21 and July 21 so those dates can bracket the relevant time frame on the calendar. The image below is excerpted from an SvN shadow study showing the July 21 impacts, which of course are identical to the May 21 impacts.



These impacts are as seen from above rather than as seen on the Cathedral's west elevation discussed earlier. The shadow impact at 6:18 pm on May 21 / July 21 appears as an orange-coloured bar landing on the Cathedral and extending to beyond Frederick St. Like SvN's June 21 shadow impacts discussed above, there are no results after 6:18 pm.

The photo on page 6, taken at 6:20 pm on May 26, 2025, shows that the Cathedral is currently in full sunlight after 6:00 pm in late May / late July. Post-6:18 pm impacts would have to be added to the SvN predictions to learn the extent to which this sunlit interval would be impaired if the proposed 23 Toronto St. tower were to be built.

Recommendations:

1. That the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, be requested to obtain – from SvN Architects + Planners – a report showing post-6:18 pm shadow impacts on the Cathedral’s west elevation due to the proposed 23 Toronto St. tower on May 21, June 21 and July 21, such impacts to be spaced 15 minutes apart and ending when the tower’s shadow no longer affects the Cathedral.
2. That the Toronto and East York Community Council defer consideration of the 23 Toronto St. application until the requested shadow impacts are available and publicly reported.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Alan Mounari".

VP, Board of Directors, Spire Condominium (TSCC 1864)
33 Lombard St., Toronto M5C 3H8



Photo taken June 23, 2025 at 7:12 pm



Photo taken May 26, 2025 at 6:20 PM

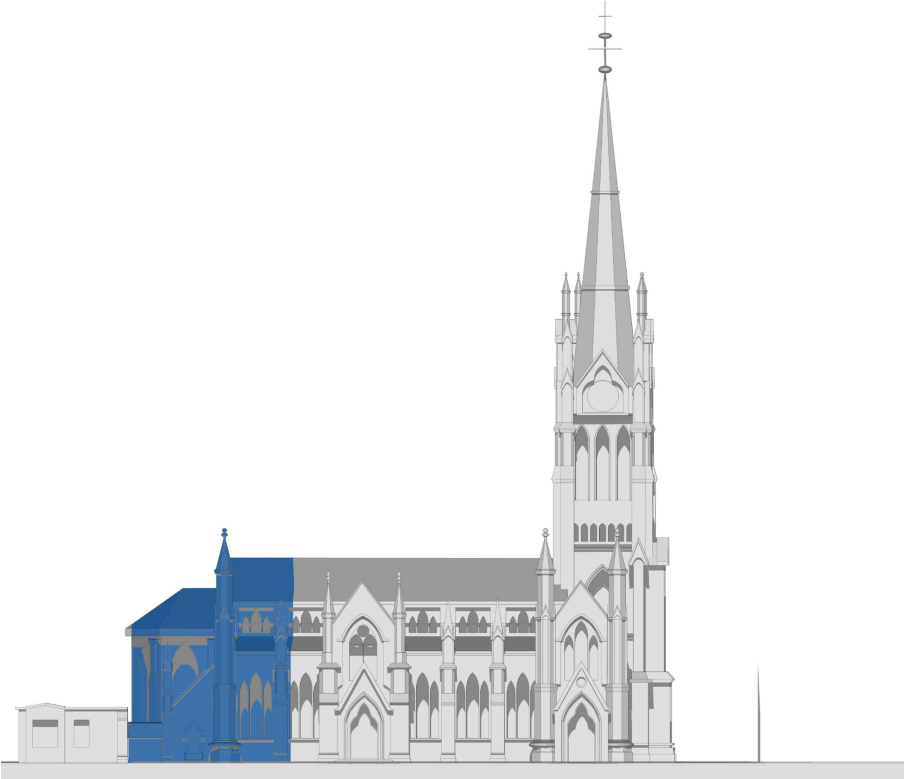
23 Toronto St.

Shadows on St James Cathedral - West Elevation Study

17/03/2026

SvN

June 21



June 21 - 4:18pm



June 21 - 4:33pm

 Current Proposal - 23 Toronto St  15 Toronto St  Existing shadow

June 21



June 21 - 4:48pm



June 21 - 5:03pm

 Current Proposal - 23 Toronto St  15 Toronto St  Existing shadow

June 21



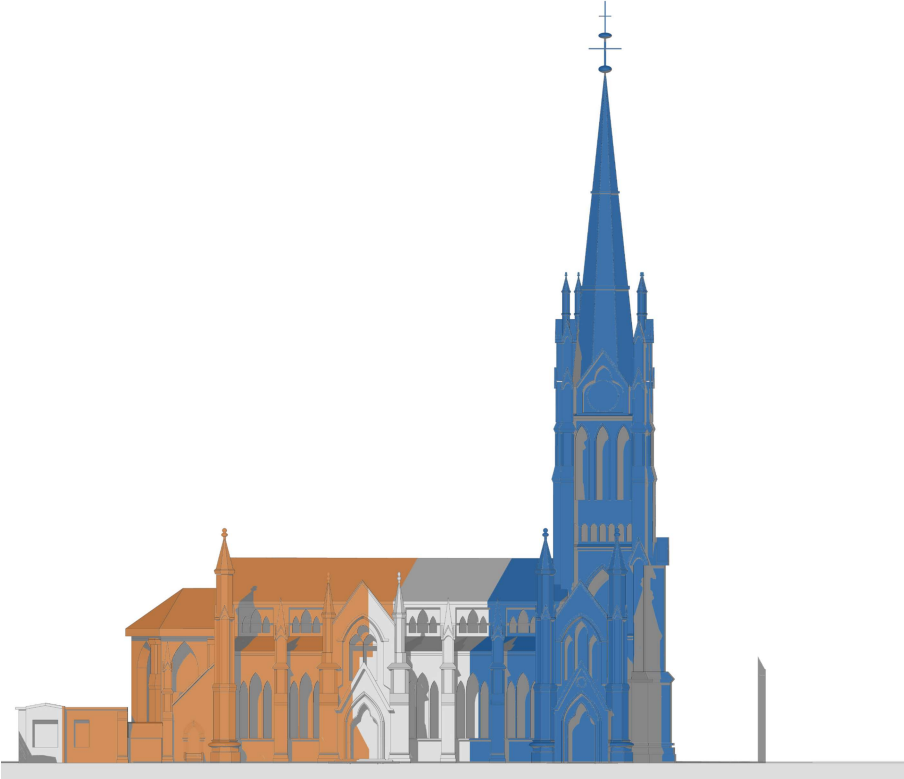
June 21 - 5:18pm



June 21 - 5:33pm

 Current Proposal - 23 Toronto St  15 Toronto St  Existing shadow

June 21



June 21 - 5:48pm



June 21 - 6:03pm

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June 21



June 21 - 6:18pm

 Current Proposal - 23 Toronto St  15 Toronto St  Existing shadow