Toronto Fire Station #212 12.5 kW, Solar Water Heating Installation

Final Report – January 2012



PROJECT SNAPSHOT

Address:	8500 Sheppard Avenue East, Toronto, ON
Building Type and Use:	Fire and EMS
Owner:	City of Toronto
Contact:	Joel Arthurs
Phone #:	416-392-5177
Email:	jarthur@toronto.ca
System type:	Solar Domestic Hot Water
Array Angle:	45 degrees from horizontal
Azimuth:	25 degrees East
System Configuration:	Drain-back with 6 collectors in parallel
Collector Manufacturer:	Thermo Dynamics
Collector Model:	G32-P
Number of Collectors:	6
Thermal Storage Tank Manufacturer:	Rheem
Thermal Storage Tank Model:	ST120 (435 litres)
Number of Thermal Storage Tanks:	2
Collector Fluid:	Water
System Size (kW thermal):	12.5
Total Gross Collector Area (sq. meters):	17.892
Installation Date:	December 2006

PERFORMANCE

2008/2009 Actual Performance:	528 kWh _t /kW
2008/2009 RETScreen using actual hot water consumption and local weather:	432 kWh _t /kW
2008/2009 WATSUN using actual hot water consumption and local weather profiles:	584 kWh _t /kW

FINANCIAL

Installed Cost (taxes included):	\$29,339
External Funding:	\$20,484 from Natural Resources Canada's Renewable Energy Deployment Initiative
2008/2009 Annual Savings:	\$313
Simple Payback (excluding external funding):	93.7 years
Cost per kW _t (excluding external funding):	\$2,400

Photos provided by Lucio Mesquita

MONITORING

Monitoring equipment installed:	Yes
Overview of the monitoring plan:	Two Kamstrup Multical 601 heat meters. One installed on DHW line between solar tanks and auxiliary heater (Solar Energy Delivered) and the other on the piping connecting solar tanks to the solar heat exchanger (Solar Energy Collected).
Cost of M&V (% of total project):	14% (of total project cost)
Who is analyzing the data?	City of Toronto Energy & Waste Management Office
Is there a dedicated staff person responsible for system operation management?	No



SUMMARY

The City of Toronto's 12.5 kW_t solar thermal system at Fire Hall 212 generated approximately 528 kWh_t/kW in 2008/2009, which was 22% higher than RETScreen simulated yield and 9.6% lower than WATSUN simulated yield. Designed to reduce the Fire Hall's use of natural gas for water heating, the system was installed in 2006 for \$29,339. Based on 2008/2009 performance, the project will achieve a simple payback in 93.7 years before external grants and 28.2 years after.

Hot water usage was significantly lower than estimated during the design phase of the project, resulting in the system delivering much less usable energy than was initially predicted. However, when the actual hot water usage is taking into consideration, the results indicate that the system is performing as expected. This reinforces how important the knowledge of the correct load is when designing a solar thermal project.

RETScreen is known to be conservative for solar thermal applications and the use of a more sophisticated software tool, such as WATSUN, is highly recommended.

Further investigation should be undertaken to evaluate the accuracy of heat meters for domestic water heating measurements. Also important for accurate measurement is to ensure that hot water from the system cannot migrate to the cold sensor, which can lead to an underreporting of the amount of heat delivered.

PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

This report will evaluate the performance of the solar thermal system from June 2008 to May 2009. 2010 energy production was similar to the 2008/2009 period (see Appendix A).

Actual Performance vs. Original RETScreen Simulation

The original RESTScreen analysis (Appendix B) predicts an annual energy delivery of 10.19 MWh. Actual energy delivered was 6.6 MWh, significantly below the prediction. However, the original analysis estimated a much larger usage volume than was measured. Measured usage for 2008/2009 was only 59% of the initial estimate.

The initial RETScreen assumed a daily hot water consumption of 1000 litres at 52 °C, which leads to a total annual load prediction of 18.92 MWh. However, only one month reached such high usage, December 2008.

The heat load is defined by the volume and the temperature difference between the inlet and outlet temperatures of the heating system, and in the case of Fire Hall 212, the auxiliary heater operates with a set point of 60 °C (140 °F) for a total calculated load of close to 14 MWh. Unfortunately, even when the set point temperature is taking into consideration, the heat load is significantly lower during the summer months than initially predicted, which lowers the system energy production.

Thus, the system did not reach the expected production because it operated under a much smaller heat load than it was designed for. With a smaller load, the average water temperature in the system rises, and the solar collector efficiency is reduced.

Actual Performance vs. RETScreen and WATSUN Simulations

The initial RETScreen inputs were modified to account for measured ambient temperatures, solar radiation, and hot water consumption. Sources of inputs and modifications made can be found in Appendix C.

With the modified inputs, the estimated energy delivered was reduced to 5.4 MWh/year, while the actual delivered was 6.6 MWh. Therefore, the system would have delivered 22% above the estimated RETScreen simulations using the measured heat load.

RETScreen is known to give a conservative estimation of energy delivered by solar heating systems (see Appendix D for more discussion), which is why a more accurate software tool, WATSUN, was used to evaluate the performance of the system.

WATSUN algorithms were developed at the University of Waterloo and it performs a full yearly analysis using hourly data. It has been shown to provide accurate results and it allows the modification of weather data inputs, which is very valuable for performance verification, as in this case. As with RETScreen, WATSUN is available free of charge by Natural Resources Canada.

Since not all hourly data was available as an input for WATSUN, a fixed daily hot water usage profile was used, based on the average profile of January, February and March of 2009 (Appendix E). The average monthly hot water draw was also adjusted and factors were applied to WATSUNs solar radiation and ambient temperature data to be similar to the measured values from a University of Toronto meteorological station.

Considering that the simulations used a fixed draw profile and the weather data was not measured on-site, the results agree well and indicate the system is performing as it should. Figure 1 and Appendix F compares the WATSUN simulation to the actual performance.



Figure 1: 2008/2009 Energy Delivered to Solar Tanks - WATSUN Simulation vs. Actual Performance

Measurement Issues

One observation should be made regarding the measurement of the hot water delivered by the solar system. Most heat meters are designed for fairly steady operation, mostly for heat distribution networks. They do not fare as well under dynamic loads, such as domestic hot water applications, especially under short draws, which can lead to an under reporting of energy delivered (see Appendix G for further discussion).

Another issue that also contributes to under-metering is the fact that under low-load conditions, the cold temperature sensor located close to the inlet of the solar storage tanks sometimes gets heated by thermosyphoning flow from the water tank. Then when there is a draw, the warm water in the supply piping causes the meter to register a smaller heat delivered. This can be made worse by un-insulated or poorly insulated sensor fittings and poor location of the sensors. Adaptors that are used to fit sensors made with European standard thread sizes to North American sizes also cause the sensor to sit farther away from the water stream, as it can be seen in Appendix G.

Another measurement issue appears to be the migration of some hot water to the cold water sensor, which is worse in the summer when the temperatures inside the solar tanks are much higher. See Appendix H for further discussion).

BUSINESS CASE

Table 1 presents the business case for the Fire Hall 212 Solar Thermal Project. This analysis uses he 2008/2009 delivered energy of 6600 kWh,/yr, which would save approximately \$313 per year, assuming a natural gas price of 35¢/m³. The simple payback for this scenario would be 93.7 years before grants and 28.2 years after.

	Total Cost Installed	Grants	Array Output (kWh _t /yr)	Dollars Saved*	Simple Payback (years)	Payback after grants (years)
Adjusted Feasibility Study	\$29,338.80	\$20,484	6,600	\$313	93.7	28.2

Table 1: Fire Hall 212 Solar Thermal Project: Business Case for 2008/2009

*Assumes a 70% burner efficiency and a burner-tip natural gas price of 0.35 per m³.

Installed System Costs

The breakdown of installed system costs are shown in Table 2. The total cost of the system was \$29,338.80, or \$2,400 per kW installed. Materials accounted for approximately 66% of the total cost. Natural Resources Canada's Renewable Energy Deployment Initiative provided a grant of \$20,484 for the project, bringing the final project cost down to \$8,854.80, or \$708 per kW installed.

Table 2: As-Built Cost Breakdown

FH#212	Material	Installation	Total
Solar collectors	\$5,400.00	\$900.00	\$6,300.00
Collector rack/support, fasteners	\$2,054.00	\$1,600.00	\$3,654.00
Piping from collector array to solar storage tank and to conventional hot water tank	\$1,540.00	\$800.00	\$2,340.00
Pipe and solar storage tank insulation	\$670.00	\$400.00	\$1,070.00
Solar heat exchanger	\$700.00	\$300.00	\$1,000.00
Solar heat storage tank(s)	\$3,050.00	\$450.00	\$3,500.00
Pump(s) (collector-side)	\$920.00	\$450.00	\$1,370.00
Solar system controller	\$600.00	\$750.00	\$1,350.00
Design and supervision	\$0.00	\$1,800.00	\$1,800.00
Shipping	\$1,450.00	\$0.00	\$1,450.00
Metering	\$2,660.93	\$1,375.00	\$4,035.93
Commissioning	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Other Additional Structural Work	\$268.87	\$1,200.00	\$1,468.87
Total (tax included)	\$19,313.80	\$10,025.00	\$29,338.80
External funding			\$20,484
FINAL TOTAL			\$8,854.80

APPENDIX A: 2008/2009 VS. 2010

Figure A1: Comparison between 2008/2009 and 2010 Average Hot Water Consumption



2008/2009 2010



Figure A2: Comparison between 2008/2009 and 2010 Actual Energy Delivered

2008/2009 2010

The 2010 consumption and energy delivered are similar to the numbers measured between 2008 and 2009. Most of the performance difference in terms of energy delivered comes from the drop in production in August, most likely due to very low hot water consumption registered for August 2010.

APPENDIX B: ORIGINAL RETSCREEN ANALYSIS

RETScreen[®] Solar Resource and Heating Load Calculation - Solar Water Heating Project

e Latitude and Collect	or Orientation		Estimate			Notes/Range
Nearest location for we	eather data	l	Toronto Int'l. A, ON		<u></u>	ee Weather Databas
Latitude of project loca	ition	°N	43.7			-90.0 to 90.0
Slope of solar collector	r	0	45.0			0.0 to 90.0
Azimuth of solar collect	tor	0	10.0			0.0 to 180.0
nthly Inputs						
te: 1. Cells in grey are not use e, or method for calculating co	ed for energy calcula Id water temperature	tions; 2. Revisit this table to e).	o check that all required in	puts are filled if you chan	ge system type or sola	ar collector type or pool
	Fraction of month	Monthly average daily radiation	Monthly average	Monthly average	Monthly average	Monthly averag daily radiation
	used	on horizontal	temperature	relative humidity	wind speed	in plane of solar collector
Month	(0 - 1)	(kWh/m²/d)	(°C)	(%)	(m/s)	(kWh/m²/d)
January	1.00	1.64	-5.9	(70)	4 9	3 19
February	1.00	2.57	-5.2		4.5	4 23
March	1.00	3.67	-0.5		4 7	4.58
April	1.00	4.74	6.5		4.8	4.84
Mav	1.00	5.76	13.1		3.9	5.17
June	1.00	6.31	17.7		3.7	5.34
July	1.00	6.24	21.0		3.3	5.42
August	1.00	5.22	19.8		3.0	5.04
September	1.00	3.92	15.1		3.3	4.46
October	1.00	2.64	8.5		3.7	3.74
November	1.00	1.51	3.3		4.3	2.46
December	1.00	1.25	-2.9		4.4	2.37
			Annual	Season of Lise		
Solar radiation (horizon	ntal)	MWh/m ²	1.39	1.39		
Solar radiation (tilted s	urface)	MWh/m ²	1.55	1.55		
Average temperature		°C	7.5	7.5		
Average wind speed		m/s	4.0	4.0		
or Heating Load Cale	ulation		Estimato			Notos/Pango
Application type	ulation	- 1	Service hot water			Notes/Kange
System configuration		_	With storage			
Building or load type		_	Industrial			
Number of units		- 1	-			
Rate of occupancy		%	-			50% to 100%
Estimated hot water	use (at ~60 °C)	l /d	N/A			
Hot water use		L/d	1.000			
Desired water tempe	erature	°C	52			
Days per week syste	em is used	d	7			1 to 7
Cold water temperatur	e	- 1	Auto			
Minimum		°C	2.8	I		1.0 to 10.0
Maximum		°C	12.3			5.0 to 15.0
Months SWH system i	n use	month	12.00			
Energy demand for mo	onths analysed	MWh	18.92			
<i>a,</i>	,	GJ	68.11			
					Return t	o Enerav Model sher

RETScreen[®] Energy Model - Solar Water Heating Project Training & Support Estimate Notes/Range Site Conditions Project name Fire Hall #212 See Online Manual 8500 Sheppard Ave., Toronto Project location Nearest location for weather data Toronto Int'I. A, ON Complete SR&HL sheet Annual solar radiation (tilted surface) MWh/m² 1.55 Annual average temperature °C 7.5 -20.0 to 30.0 Annual average wind speed m/s 4.0 Desired load temperature °C 52 L/d 1.000 Hot water use Number of months analysed month 12.00 Energy demand for months analysed MWh 18.92 System Characteristics Estimate Notes/Range Application type Service hot water (with storage) **Base Case Water Heating System** Natural gas - m³ Heating fuel type % 55% to 350% Heating system seasonal efficiency 60% Solar Collector Collector type Glazed See Technical Note 1 Solar water heating collector manufacturer Thermo Dynamics See Product Database Solar water heating collector model G32-P 3.00 1.00 to 5.00 Area per collector m² 0.50 to 0.90 Fr (tau alpha) coefficient 0.74 Fr UL coefficient (W/m²)/°C 3.50 to 6.00 5.25 Suggested number of collectors 5 Number of collectors 6

m²

L/m²

yes/no

%

 $\rm mm$

mm

W/m²

%

%

Total collector area

Storage capacity

Balance of System

Pipe diameter

Ratio of storage capacity to coll. area

Heat exchanger/antifreeze protection

Heat exchanger effectiveness

Pumping power per collector area

Suggested pipe diameter

Piping and solar tank losses

Losses due to snow and/or dirt

Storage

Horz. dist. from mech. room to collect	or m	5	5 to 20
# of floors from mech. room to collected	or -	2	0 to 20
Annual Energy Production (12.00 mont	hs analysed)	Estimate	Notes/Range
Pumping energy (electricity)	MWh	0.36	
Specific yield	kWh/m²	566	
System efficiency	%	37%	
Solar fraction	%	54%	
Renewable energy delivered	MWh	10.19	
	GJ	36.70	
			Complete Cost Analysis sheet

18.0

50.0

900

Yes

90%

13

19

11

3%

3%

37.5 to 100.0

50% to 85%

8 to 25 or PVC 35 to 50 8 to 25 or PVC 35 to 50

3 to 22, or 0

1% to 10%

2% to 10%

APPENDIX C: MODIFIED RETSCREEN INPUTS AND SOURCES

Since the initial Retscreen analysis was done with version 3.0 of the software package and the version now available is 4.0, the first step was to redo the simulation in the new version with the same inputs to verify if the simulated values were consistent. Under those conditions, both version 3 and 4 predicted an annual thermal load of 18.1 MWh/ year, and 10.1 MWh/year of heat delivered by the solar system.

Then small changes were made to account for more realistic inputs. First the heat exchanger effectiveness was lowered to 70%, which lower the predicted delivered energy to 9.7 MWh, then the azimuth was corrected to 25°. This changed the output to 9.6 MWh/year. The next step was to introduce the measured solar radiation and average ambient temperature. The cold water minimum and maximum temperatures were also adjusted to the values found in Table A. With the new values, the estimated energy delivered rose to 9.9 MWh/year. This number was still much higher than the measured heat delivered. The next step was to modify the hot water demand to reflect the volume and temperature level that the system had experienced.

The weather data used was taken from the University of Toronto Meterological Station at the Mississauga Campus (solar irradiation) and Pearson International Airport (ambient temperature) stations. Hot water consumption was taken from the system measurements, which were recorded by the heat meters and downloaded periodically by City of Toronto staff. Water Main cold water temperatures were adjusted using long-term averages measured by the University of Toronto in downtown Toronto and are shown in Table C.

Month	Avg. Mains Water Temp (°C)
Jan	3.5
Feb	2.95
Mar	2.97
Apr	4.53
Мау	6.91
Jun	8.18
Jul	10.13
Aug	13.37
Sep	14
Oct	9.85
Nov	6.95
Dec	5.04

 Table C1: Average mains water temperature for downtown Toronto.

Month	Irradiation	Average Ambient Temperature
	kWh/m² day	°C
Jan	1.68	-8.8
Feb	2.69	-3.7
Mar	4.04	0.8
Apr	4.84	7.8
May	6.15	13.1
Jun	5.56	19.6
Jul	5.93	21.5
Aug	5.47	19.7
Sep	4.1	16.9
Oct	2.9	9
Nov	1.58	2.9
Dec	1.22	-3.1

Table C2: Global horizontal solar irradiation and average temperatures for the period under analysis- June 2008 to May 2009.

Table C3: Weather data for 2008/2009 and 2010

	2008	-2009	2010		
	Horizontal Global Solar Irradiation	Average Ambient Temperature	Horizontal Global Solar Irradiation	Average Ambient Temperature	
	kWh/m² day	°C	kWh/m² day	°C	
Jan	1.68	-8.80	1.51	-5.20	
Feb	2.69	-3.70	2.08	-3.40	
Mar	4.04	0.80	3.73	4.40	
Apr	4.84	7.80	5.48	10.50	
May	6.15	13.10	5.93	16.00	
Jun	5.56	19.60	5.84	19.20	
Jul	5.93	21.50	6.08	23.30	
Aug	5.47	19.70	5.04	22.40	
Sep	4.10	16.90	3.68	16.40	
Oct	2.90	9.00	2.66	10.20	
Nov	1.58	2.90	1.83	4.50	
Dec	1.22	-3.10	1.20	-3.80	
TOTAL	1406.81	Avg=7.98	1373.79	Avg=9.54	

APPENDIX D: RETSCREEN DISCUSSION

RETScreen is based on the f-chart method. The f-chart method was developed by researchers at the University of Wisconsin in the 1970s¹. F-chart is based on hundreds of simulations using a more sophisticated tool, TRNSYS. From the results of the simulations, simple parametric equations were created which allowed the performance evaluation of solar heating systems even by hand calculations, which was the goal when the method was created. F-chart is known to give conservative estimations of energy delivered by solar water heating systems, which seem to be the case in the present analysis.

APPENDIX E: HOT WATER CONSUMPTION PROFILE



Table E1: Fixed daily hot water usage profile used for WATSUN simulation

1 Beckman et al, "Solar Heating Design, by the F-chart Method", Wiley-Interscience, 1977.

APPENDIX F: WATSUN ACCURACY

	WATSUN Estimated			WATSUN Estimated A	Actual	
Month	Heat collected	Heat losses	Heat delivered	Heat delivered	Difference Between WATSUN predicted and Actual delivered	
	kWh	kWh	kWh	kWh	(Watsun-Actual)/Actual	
Jan	462.4	-3.5	465.9	497.0	-6.26%	
Feb	635.0	36.8	598.3	616.0	-2.87%	
Mar	907.4	85.6	821.8	762.0	7.85%	
Apr	816.8	101.3	715.5	638.0	12.15%	
May	864.8	133.5	731.3	674.0	8.50%	
Jun	826.8	101.3	725.5	596.0	21.73%	
Jul	817.1	152.1	665.0	542.0	22.69%	
Aug	895.6	151.7	743.9	634.0	17.33%	
Sep	692.5	141.3	551.1	471.0	17.01%	
Oct	674.5	91.1	583.4	492.0	18.57%	
Nov	395.2	23.5	371.7	401.0	-7.31%	
Dec	332.5	-0.3	332.8	288.0	15.55%	
Total	8320.5	1014.3	7306.1	6611.0	10.51%	

Table F1: WATSUN predictions vs. Actual Performance

APPENDIX G: HEAT MEASUREMENT ACCURACY

One of the reasons for the reduced accuracy is the fact that, to preserve battery charge, the meter calculator only checks the flow rate at discrete intervals. A recent study² tested heat meters under short dynamic loads, with 30 seconds of flow at 0.2 I/s and 300 seconds with no flow. The cycles are repeated until a total measured load equals 20 kWh. The tests were conducted with well known heat meter models and the results are presented in Table G.

Manufacturer	Model	Flow Meter Type	Error in Test (%)
Kamstrup	Multical Compact	Ultrasonic	-13.8
Kamstrup	Multical 66C92F0312	Ultrasonic	-10.8
Enermet	10EVL	Inductive	-3.8
ABB	F3	Ultrasonic	-2.59
Siemens	2WR5	Ultrasonic	-35.35
Actaris	CF Echo	Ultrasonic	-8.06

Table G1: Measurement Device Accuracy

2 Jomni, Y.,"Improving Heat Measurement Accuracy in District Heating Substations", , 2006, Doctoral Thesis, Lulea University of Technology, Sweden.

From those tests it is apparent that all models measured energy below what was really delivered. Of course, domestic hot water loads are not composed only by short bursts, but some of the energy would not be measured under those conditions.



Figure G1: Detail of sensor installation at Fire Hall 231

Figure G2: Heat meters installed at Fire Hall 212



APPENDIX H: MIGRATION OF HOT WATER TO COLD SENSOR

Figures H1 and H2 below show the hourly average values for water draw, inlet temperature and outlet temperature to the solar storage tanks and to the heat meter. Figure H1 is for the period between the 21st to the 23rd of March of 2011, a time of the year when average mains water temperature is around 3 °C. Figure H2 shows data for the period between the 1st and the 3rd of August of 2011, when average mains water temperature is around 14 °C. As it can be seen, in both cases the hourly average inlet temperature is much higher than the expected mains water temperature.



Figure H1: March 21 to 23, 2011

Figure H2: August 1 to 3, 2011



APPENDIX I: SYSTEM SCHEMATICS

Figure I1: Solar Domestic Water Heating Schematic



The array is actually 1×6 , not 2×3 .



About the SolarCity Partnership

The SolarCity Partnership is a joint initiative of the Toronto Atmospheric Fund, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority and the City of Toronto designed to promote best practices and careful monitoring of large solar installations. SolarCity Partnership is an information-sharing hub for both public and private organizations involved in deploying solar power. Our **SolarCityPartnership.ca** website provides case studies, research, and solar weather data to help with the effective use of zero emissions energy from the sun.



We want to hear from you!

If you have further best practices recommendations, insights into system design, deployment or maintenance or a project to profile, please get involved with the SolarCity Partnership! Contact us at:



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