

QAHV System Development and Applications Testing

May 2022



QAHV System Development and Applications Testing

Prepared for

Karen Janowitz, Project Principal Investigator

Washington State University Energy Program on behalf of Bonneville Power Administration

Prepared by Scott Spielman, PE Ecotope Inc.

The following report was funded by the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) to assess emerging technology topics that have the potential to increase energy efficiency. BPA is committed to identify, assess, and develop emerging technologies with significant potential for contributing to efficient use of electric power resources in the Northwest.

BPA does not endorse specific products or manufacturers. Any mention of a particular product or manufacturer should not be construed as an implied endorsement. The information, statements, representations, graphs, and data presented in these reports are provided by BPA as a public service. For more reports and background on BPA's efforts to "fill the pipeline" with emerging, energy-efficient technologies, visit the ET website at www.bpa.gov\goto\e3t.



Table of Contents

Table of Contents	iii
Table of Figures	iii
Acronyms	iv
Executive Summary	1
Packaged System Components	1
Heat Exchanger and Pump Assembly	2
Parallel Electric Water Heater	
Thermal Energy Storage	4
Tank Design	4
Multiple Tanks	5
Swing Tanks	6
System Configuration Updates to Reduce Connected Electric Load	6
Testing and Findings	7
Atlanta	7
Seattle	7
Conclusions	8
Works Cited	9
Appendix A – Applications Testing Setup 1	0
Appendix B – Parallel Electric Water Heater 1	6

Table of Figures

Figure 1. QAHV packaged system simplified schematic	1
Figure 2. Thermal exchange module sold in France	
Figure 3. Heat exchanger and pump assembly control valve test setup	
Figure 4. Cold climate sizing methodology with parallel electric water heater	
Figure 5. Stratified storage tank side view	
Figure 6. Stratified storage tank top view	
Figure 7. Piping design to promote stratification	
Figure 8. Series thermal storage system piping	
Figure 9. Parallel thermal storage system piping	



Acronyms

- OAT Outdoor Air Temperature
- HPWH Heat Pump Water Heater
- EAT Exhaust Air Temperature
- IWT Incoming Water Temperature
- NSF National Sanitation Foundation
- SDWA Safe Drinking Water Act
- IECC International Energy Conservation Code
- COP Coefficient of Performance
- PLC Programmable Logic Controller
- BPHE Brazed Plate Heat Exchanger
- GPM Gallons per minute



Executive Summary

Throughout 2020, Ecotope worked with Mitsubishi Electric Trane US (METUS) to develop a fully packaged system for product launch in the United States. A full set of components for the heat exchanger and pump assembly, thermal energy storage, and temperature maintenance were selected. Piping and controls details were developed to provide a well-operating system that can serve up to 20 stories. Applications testing was successfully performed at both METUS's lab in Atlanta and as part of commissioning for the demonstration project that is now in place in Seattle.

While the product is ready for market, there are opportunities for improvement. The heat exchanger and pump assembly, thermal energy storage system, and temperature maintenance system all have areas that could be improved with another design iteration.

This study follows both a product Feasibility Studyⁱ and Load Shift Feasibility Studyⁱⁱ. Measurement and verificationⁱⁱⁱ (M&V) is the next step in the Technology Innovation Model (TIM) and will help identify other potential design improvements; optimize performance by fine-tuning controls sequences; calculate system COPs; and assess demand-response capability.

Packaged System Components

The following sections discuss development and test findings for the major components in the QAHV packaged system. See Figure 1 for a simplified schematic of the system identifying the heat exchanger and pump assembly, thermal energy storage, and

TEMPERATURE

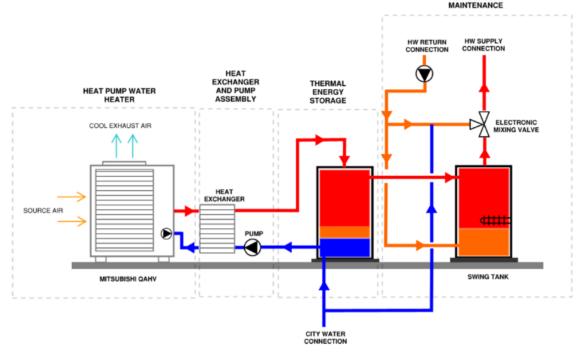


Figure 1. QAHV packaged system simplified schematic



temperature maintenance discussed subsequently.

shown in Figure 2. A pre-packaged skid for the assembly would simplify installations.

Heat Exchanger and Pump Assembly

The QAHV requires a heat exchanger between it and the potable water to protect its internal CO₂ gas cooler from variable potable water quality. The additional heat exchanger means a separate pump on the potable water side is needed. The heat exchanger, pump, connected piping, and ancillary piping equipment – strainers, shut off valves, air separator, pressure and temperature sensors, flow meter, expansion tank, and buffer tank – are, together, considered the heat exchanger and pump assembly.

A flow-through expansion tank is used to act as both a buffer tank and expansion tank. While this design strategy simplifies the assembly, it also requires the expansion tank hold 10-gallons of water at cold fill, which requires a special commissioning procedure. To ensure commissioning is done correctly, METUS's Diamond Builder software will include a calculation that was developed to provide air and water pressure settings in the flow-through expansion tank for each installation. Ecotope recommends this procedure be added to the "start-up wizard" built into the control panel sold with the QAHV.

METUS has considered offering the heat exchanger and pump assembly as a prepackaged skid by contracting with a local US manufacturer. This assembly would be comparable to the *Thermal Exchange Module* currently sold in France with the QAHV and





The US packaged system uses a variable speed pump to control flow through the heat exchanger on the potable water side. The heat exchanger and pump assembly is unusual because very low flow rates are required through the heat exchanger. The CO₂ refrigerant cycle operates most efficiently with cold entering water and hot leaving water temperatures, which are ideal for domestic water systems, but require low flow rates.

The flow range required in mild climates is at the limits of what can be controlled using a standard (centrifugal) pump. In climates where winter temperature drop below 10°F a pump alone may not be able to meet a 150°F outlet water setpoint. At -10°F, the current approach may not be able to produce 120°F in a single pass through the heat exchanger.



While a control valve could be added to the assembly to meet setpoint under extremely cold conditions, it would likely be costly to develop. There are no currently available NSF-rated control valves. So, to add a control valve to the assembly, a valve would need to be NSF-certified, or a low-lead valve could be packaged with an NSF-certified pre-packaged skid – like the one discussed previously.

Additionally, a method of controlling the valve would have to be developed. A convenience of using a variable-speed pump to modulate water flow is that it can adjust its speed to meet a setpoint on the outlet of the heat exchanger using built-in controls.

Although a control valve-based option may not be made available until future market adoption of the technology allows for economic feasibility, METUS has started investigating options. Appendix A includes the test setup for Applications Testing. The detail *Heat Exchanger and Pump Assembly Test* shows a piping configuration that will allow METUS to test different control valves. Figure 3 shows a picture of the test setup in Atlanta.

Parallel Electric Water Heater

Another way to meet setpoint in cold climates is by using parallel electric water heater design – shown in Appendix B. The design allows the same electric water heater to provide four functions:

- 1. Swing tank heating
- **2.** Backup heating in case of heat pump failure.
- **3.** Temperature boost to meet setpoint in cold conditions.



Figure 3. Heat exchanger and pump assembly control valve test setup

4. Temperature boost for demand response "Load Up" conditions.

Because it reduces the total electrical service required, it is also discussed below under *Swing Tanks*.

Using a parallel electric water heater to boost temperature to meet setpoint in cold conditions will slightly increase energy usage. However, because the QAHV efficiency drops with colder outdoor air temperatures, energy increases will usually be small and the economic and functional benefits likely outweigh the small increase in energy usage.

In many cases it will not make sense to add additional QAHVs to meet demand in cold conditions. QAHV capacity also drops with



3

outdoor air temperature, and the cost of adding additional capacity with additional QAHV is high compared to adding a small instantaneous electrical water heater. Engineers and building owners may prefer to allow electric resistance heating to supplement QAHV heating during the coldest few days of the year. Fortunately, it is only during the coldest days of the year that the QAHV will not be able to reach setpoint without a control valve. The electric water heater can both provide supplemental heat and boost temperature to meet setpoint on those days.

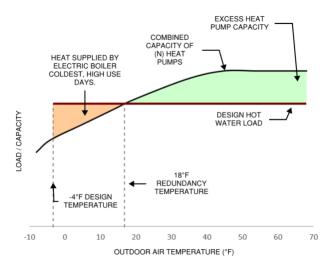


Figure 4. Cold climate sizing methodology with parallel electric water heater

Figure 4 illustrates a cold climate sizing method for a QAHV system with a parallel electric water heater. A "Redundancy Temperature" of 18°F was chosen – this means the number of QAHVs selected can meet the design load at 18°F. However, there is a design temperature of -4°F at this location. The electric water heater is selected to provide supplemental heating at low temperatures and backup heating in case a QAHV fails.

Thermal Energy Storage

Tank Design

QAHV thermal storage tanks are specifically designed to increase stratification and thermal energy storage performance.

Figures 5 and 6 show side and top views of the storage tank offering. The tanks are provided with six thermowells for more detailed monitoring and control. Specially designed sparged fittings are used on top and bottom inlet/outlets to increase stratification. The sparged fittings both lower the entering velocity and divert the flow direction from vertical to horizontal, which prevents mixing. Figure 7, illustrates how vertical inlets can create undesirable flows within a storage tank that degrade stratification.^{iv}

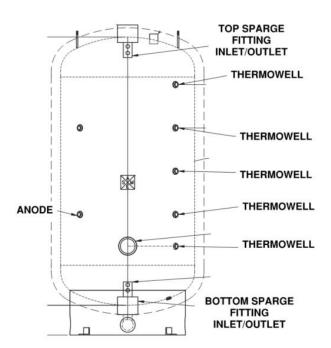


Figure 5. Stratified storage tank side view



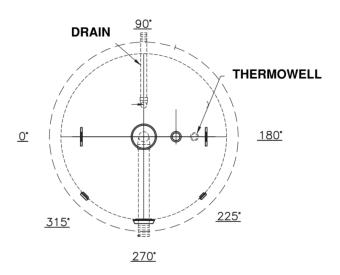


Figure 6. Stratified storage tank top view

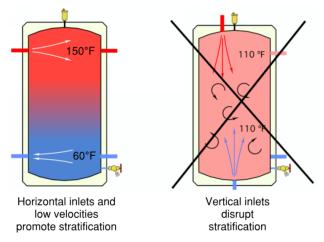


Figure 7. Piping design to promote stratification

The QAHV packaged system currently offers three tank sizes: 175-gal, 285-gal, and 500gal. The 175-gal tank will primarily be used for retrofits and tight spaces. The 285- and 500-gal tanks are ideal for new construction or retrofits with more space and flexibility. METUS is adding 750-gal and 1,000-gal tank options for larger buildings that should be available early in 2022. Unfortunately, during construction of the demonstration project it was discovered that the thermowell on the bottom of the tank does not have enough clearance to be used. METUS is in the process of having this thermowell moved to the side of the tank in their standard offering.

Multiple Tanks

Both series and parallel configurations, shown in Figures 8 and 9, were discussed as options when more than one tank is required. Key advantages to each option are below.

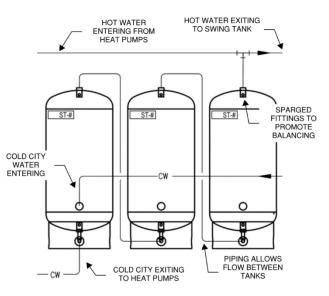


Figure 8. Series thermal storage system piping

Series Configuration:

- 1. Different sized tanks can be used.
- **2.** Simple balancing with just one set of inlets/outlets for the system.
- When multiple tanks are used, staging can be achieved using one temperature sensor per tank.



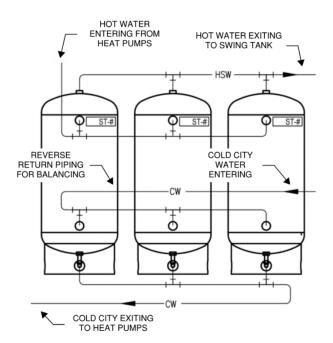


Figure 9. Parallel thermal storage system piping

Parallel Configuration:

- 1. Ability to isolate, drain, and perform maintenance on a tank without interrupting the system.
- 2. Potentially increases stratification through low inlet/outlet velocities and a single thermocline region across tanks.
- **3.** Lower pressure-drop through storage system.
- **4.** More consistent control setup with different numbers of tanks.

The initial tank offering will be series, due to balancing concerns, but parallel is being tested at the demonstration project in Seattle. If M&V results indicate the system can be balanced METUS will allow a parallel offering.

Swing Tanks

Initially, two electric resistance heating tanks were selected as swing tanks – a 150-gallon

tank, and a 200-gallon tank. The swing tanks selected each have three electric resistance heating elements and three relays that allow them to engage a different number of electric elements and alter the setpoint. During normal operation, the swing tank will operate with the minimum electric resistance. During a demand response *Load Up* condition, additional electric resistance capacity can be used to rapidly elevate temperature. And should the QAHV fail for any reason, the swing tank can be used as a temporary electric resistance backup.

METUS is expanding its swing tank options in 2022. Swing tanks with lower electrical input will be offered, as well as additional tank volumes, and options for 460V power.

Applications testing was done using a traditional swing tank design, which will be offered in the first iteration of the QAHV packaged product. However, in order to reduce the amount of electric resistance needed in the system, Mitsubishi may test alternate configurations, and, if those configurations prove successful, alter the packaged system in the future.

System Configuration Updates to Reduce Connected Electric Load

Unfortunately, the current swing tank configuration has high power draws, which, increases electrical service requirements. High power draws can create higher demand charges, are more difficult to install in retrofits, and are more difficult for utilities to serve. METUS understands this issue and is looking for ways to reduce the overall peak-power draw without compromising functionality.



Preferably, QAHV systems would have no electric resistance heating. However, that may not be feasible, especially in cold climates. Three design changes to reduce electrical requirement are:

- 1. Parallel electric water heater.
- 2. Return to primary
- 3. Controlled return to primary.

The parallel electric water heater design allows a single electric water heater to heat both the primary storage and the swing tank. Although the electric resistance is not removed entirely, this configuration makes the most use of a small amount of electric resistance capacity. Additional benefits were described previously under *Heat Exchanger and Pump Assembly: Parallel Electric Water Heater.*

Return to primary is the simplest approach. The swing tank is removed, and recirculation water is returned directly to the primary storage. While all electric resistance capacity could be removed, QAHV COP and ability to provide demand response would be degraded. The QAHV would be forced to cycle on and off more and heat water already at a high temperature, which is undesirable.

Controlled return to primary adds complexity but could allow for a system with no electric resistance heating elements. Two open/closed control valves are added to the system. When the swing tank cools to a point where heating is required, the control valves are used to divert recirculation return water from the swing tank to the bottom of the primary storage tanks. This will create an artificial system draw and pull hot water from the top of the storage tanks into the swing tank, heating it.

Testing and Findings

Testing was performed in both Atlanta and Seattle. Testing in Atlanta took place one week prior to the demonstration project installation in Seattle. Because there was little time between applications testing and demonstration project installation, no changes could be made in response to applications test findings. Fortunately, the QAHV performed well in applications testing and few onsite modifications were needed. Functional tests were performed in Seattle to meet application testing criteria.

Atlanta

Testing in Atlanta allowed METUS controls engineers a preview to what the technicians would encounter in Seattle when starting the QAHV. A start-up wizard was developed to guild installers through QAHV setup.

Seattle

The HPWH skid arrived in Seattle on July 26th. It was then lifted onto the rooftop structural platform and connected to power and the existing hot water system. Start-up and testing occurred July 27th through July 29th. During this time, the startup wizard developed in Atlanta was used for the first time. It proved valuable, but some changes will be made to improve it for future installations.

After the start-up wizard was followed to set up the equipment, tests where run to make sure the controls parameters input were



functioning as expected. The QAHV performed exceptionally and the only minor issue, which occurred with secondary loop pump control, was resolved by adjusting a control setting.

In addition to functional testing, the team observed satisfactory reactions to a power outage and clogged strainer. Power loss to the unit did not require a hard reset and the system started back up as expected after a power loss. Simulated clogged strainer created heat buildup in the primary loop and caused the QAHV to shut off on high refrigerant temperature. A built-in delay prevents the unit from starting back up immediately and an alarm is signaled.

Conclusions

Ecotope and METUS have work together to design a packaged HPWH system around the QAHV. Applications testing was performed in Atlanta and Seattle which proved it should operate successfully at the demonstration project. M&V is currently underway.

Changes may be made in the future to make the system easier to install, reduce electric service requirements, and function more efficiently. However, the first iteration is a success and a leap forward for the water heating market.



Works Cited

- ⁱ Spielman S., Grist C., and Heller, J. 2020. Mitsubishi QAHV CO2 Heat Pump Water Heater Feasibility Study.
- ⁱⁱ Spielman S. 2021. Mitsubishi QAHV Load Shift Feasibility Study
- ⁱⁱⁱ Banks A., Spielman S., Heller J. 2022. Mitsubishi QAHV

Retrofit: Bayview Tower, Seattle WA

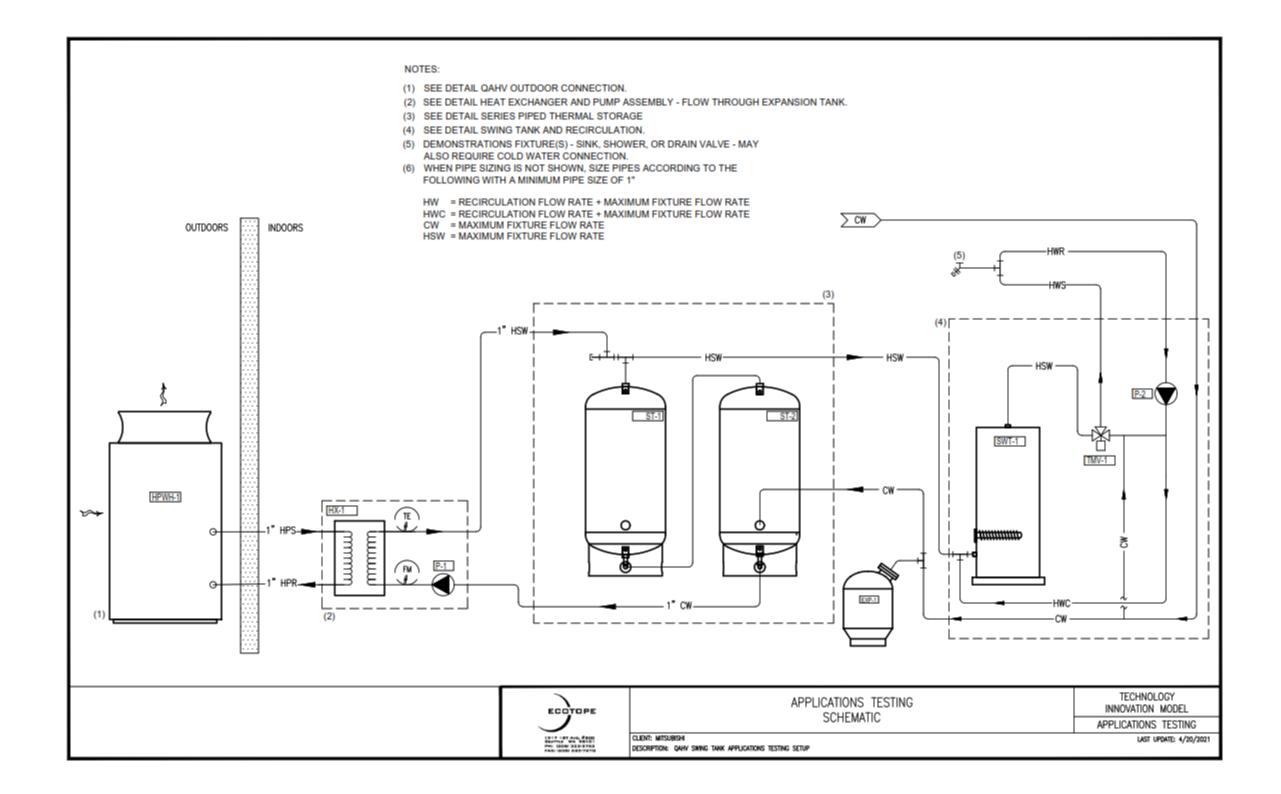
^{iv} Siegenthaler, J., 2016, *Heating with Renewable Energy*, Cengage Learning.



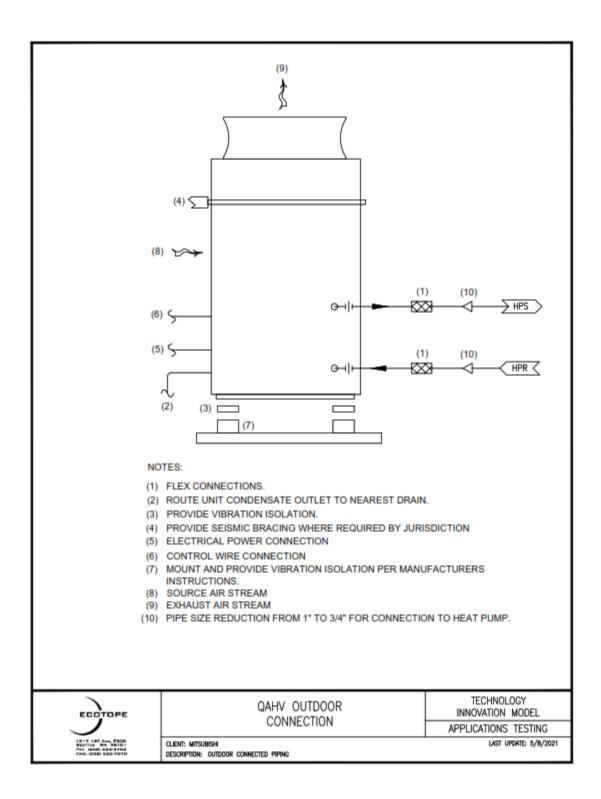
Appendix A – Applications Testing Setup

IEATER	WATER H	PUMP	HEAT	I																												
REMARKS	MOP [A]	MCA [A]		SCCR [kA]) INPUT W]	RATED [k]	CAL PHASE REQ			WEIGH (LBS)		ISIONS N, H) HES)	(L,		ONNECT (INCHE	C	COP	CITY	HEAT CAP/ (KW)	L	AKE, MODEL	M	E	SERVIC		MARK						
	110	67		5	19	1	3PH / tz (1)			882	-	0, 72.5	48, 3	2)	0.75 ()		3.83	1)	40, 60 (ну	SUBISHI, QAH	MIT	ER	HOT WAT	1	HPWH						
	АТ ЕХСНА	МЕ НЕ		E AND	PLAT														CITY MODE	IMUM CAPA	RW IN MAXI	DDE AND 60	CIENCY M	LLY EFFK	IN NORMAL	NOTES: (1) 40 kV						
REMARKS	SCALE FACTOR/ EXCESS S.A. (%)	PIPE CONN (°)	PD (PSI)	LWT (°F)	EWT (°F)	FLUID TYPE	GPM	SCALE ACTOR/ ISS S.A. (%	E/	PIPE CONN (*)	PD 961)				OPM	HEAT TRANS. AREA (FT ²)	CAPACITY (KW)	E	TYP	4	S OF DESIGN KE, MODEL)			SERVICE		МАРК						
	5%	3/4 (x2)	3.0	150	45	WATER	5	5%		3/4 (x2)	3.0	60 ;	R 160	WATE	4.5	30.4	40, 60 (1)	AND FRAME	ZED PLATE	P BR	P, B85Hx49/2P	SWE	WATER	стс нот	DOME	HX-1 NOTES:						
GE TANK	STORA														5	TANKS	PANSION	EX	N AT 60 kW	Y OPERATIO	3H CAPACITY	KW AND HIS	TON AT 40	L OPERAT	OR NORMAL							
REMARKS	BASIS OF DESIGN (MAKE, MODEL)	D HEIGHT R (INCHES)	INSULATED DIAMETER (INCHES)	DIMENSIONE DIAMETER (INCHES)	n ons	PE CONNECT	T PIF	FULL WEIGHT (LBS)	WEIGHT (BS)		(GALS)	VICE	SE	MARK	_	REWARKS	MODEL	BASIS OF DESIGN MIFTR	AIR CHARGE PRESSURE (PSIG)	WKEUP WATER REGULATOR PRESSURE (PSI)	SYSTEM CONN. (IN)	HEIGHT (N)	DIMENSIONS DIA (IN)	MIN. ACCEP. VOLUME (GAL)	VOLUME (GAL)	SERVICE	MARK EXP					
(1), (2)	NILES, S-30-063	63	44.5	30		ET, 2" HSW IN GW OUTLET 1		1,793	40	3	175	HOT WATER	DOMESTIC	ST-1		(2)	ST-130CL	AMTROL	55	75	1	35	20	27	34	DOMESTIC HOT WATER	DP.1					
(1), (2)	NILES, S-30-053	63	44.5	30		ET, 2" HSW IN CW OUTLET 1		1,793	40	3	175	HOT WATER	DOMESTIC	ST-2	_	(1)	TIA60.RX	WESSELS			1	34	16	17.5	26	HEAT PLMP LOOP	EP-2					
REMARKS (1), (3)	MODEL	ASIS OF DES MFTR	0WER (W)	PS)	E CURP (AM	PHASE	VOLTAGE (VAC)	Æ HES)	POF SIZ (INCH	TION	PIPE ONNECT (INCHE)	0	WEIGH (LBS)	EAD FT) 12		FLOW (GPM)		SERVIC HEAT PUMP	ARK EXP	_												
	_	GRUNFOS	107.7		1.0	1	115		1.2		1		12.3	15		10		DOMESTIC HO		-												
REMARKS	ATIC MIXING DIMENSIONS LETS OUTLETS CHES) (INCHES)	AT IN		CIRCULATION LOW RATE (GPM)		MNIMUM DRA (GPI	VALVE DEFFICIENT			BASIS OF (MAKE, M		ε	SERVI	\RK	M	M GAHV	V SIGNAL FRO	THROUGH 0.10 1 FLOW ADAP NECTION	INTROLLED INTROL WIT ANGED COM	(Z) C												
	1 1	6	15.6	10)	0	7	ERIES	+, 5231 SE	I, MIXCAL	CALEFF	ER	HOT WA	N-1	7																	
NG TANK	ASE RATED INPU	ELECTRICA VOLTIPH /FRE	WEIGHT (LES)		DIMENSION (D, H) (INCHES)		(INCH	AT CAPACITY (KW)	HE	, MODEL	MAKE		SERVICE	13:	MARK	-																
		208 / 35 60 Hz	650		20, 80	(12)	1.5 (12	2	IEV150-J12	NILES, J	TER	STIC HOT W	DOME	SWT-1	-																
NOLOGY ON MODEL	INNOVATIO						OULES	SCHED								TOPE	E	Г														
ONS TESTINO INST UPDATE: 4/20									UP	TEST SET	LICATIONS	S FOR APPL	isubishi In: Schedui	client: Mi Descriptio		ANE #300 A 98101 332-3763																

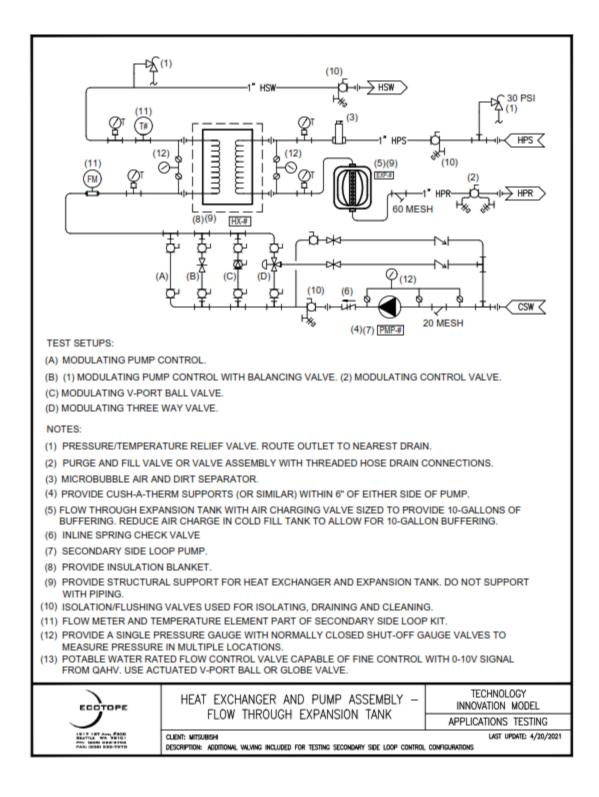




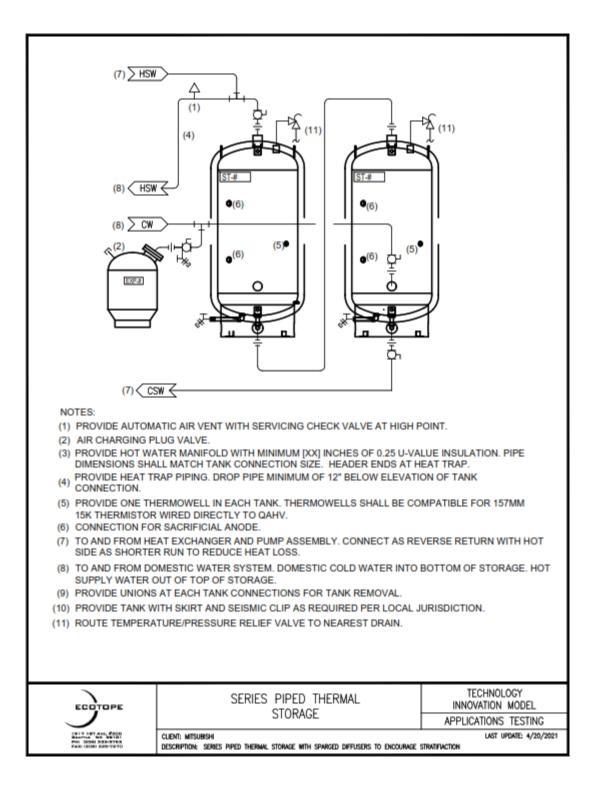




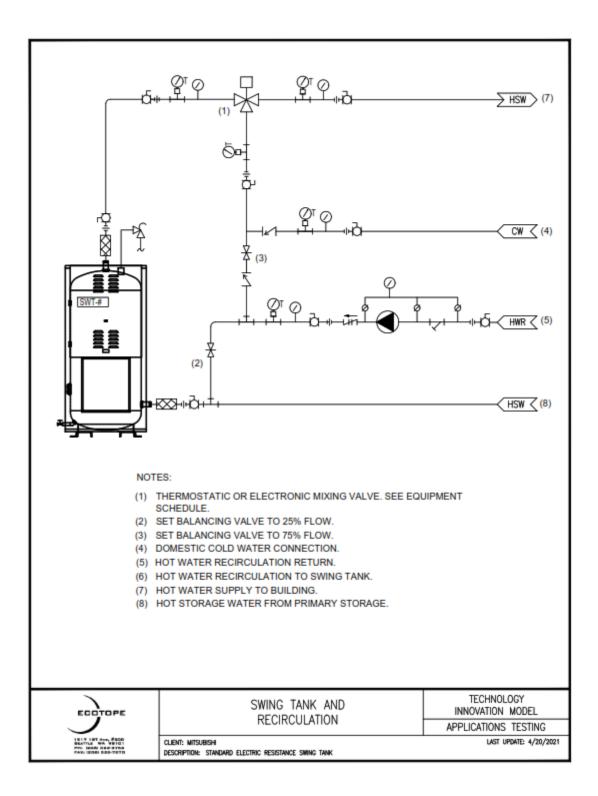




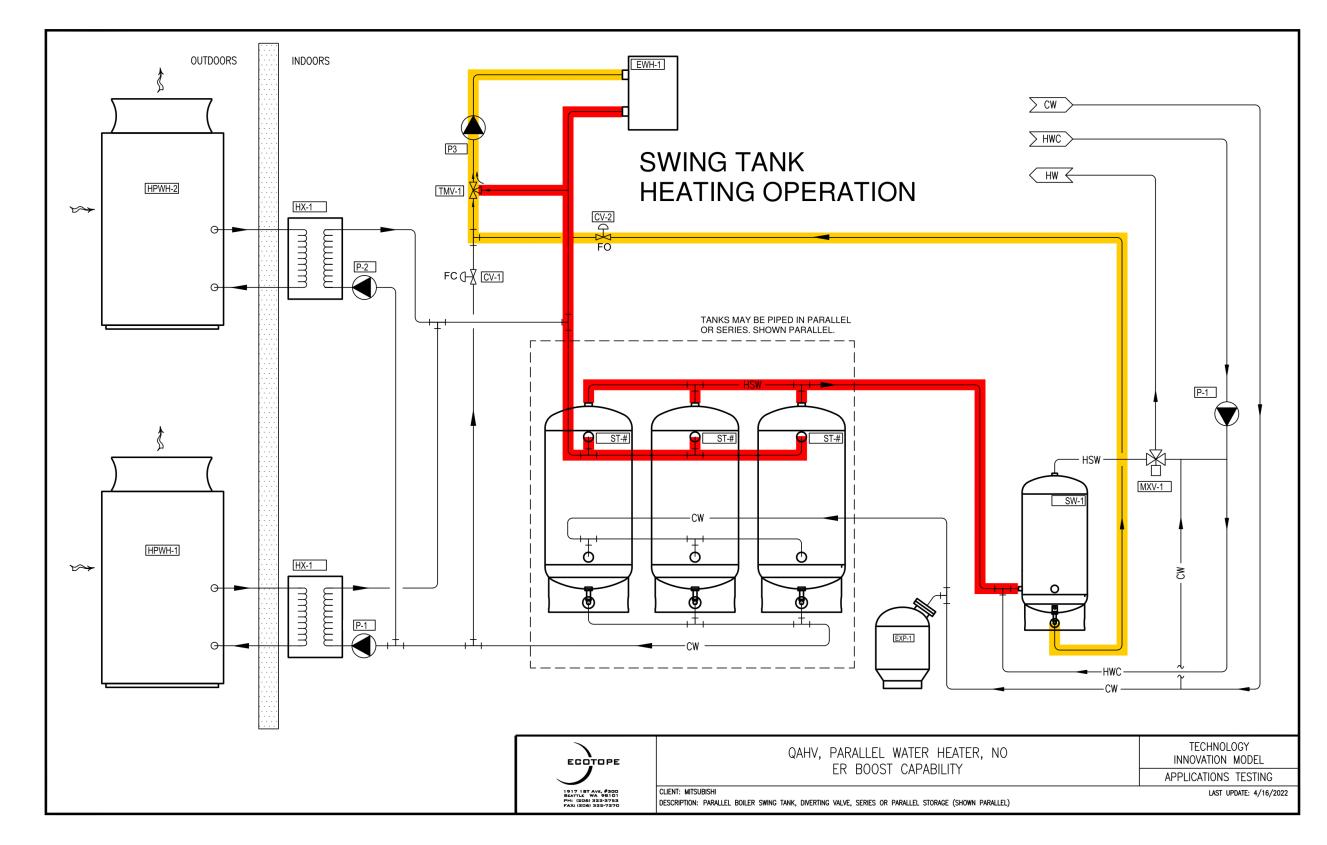












Appendix B – Parallel Electric Water Heater





