



# ARCHITECTURE

EHLINGER & ASSOCIATES

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Madame John's Legacy, Vieux Carré, New Orleans, Louisiana © 2018 Ladd P. Ehlinger

## Madame John's Legacy

"Madame John's Legacy" derives its name from the 1874 short story by George Washington Cable titled "Tite Poulette". Cable was a newspaper reporter / author, and in this story he memorialized in fiction the duplicitous and scandalous behavior of the white male Creole (then defined as French + Spanish heritage) ruling class of the New Orleans at the time, where they maintained a second household with mulatto or quadroon mistresses, including separate families by the mistresses. Upon his death, Monsieur John willed this house at 632 Dumaine St. to his mistress and her daughter. Of course, there was never a Monsieur John in ownership of the house, but the story fascinated locals and the entire country for that matter, and the house was christened with the name perhaps forever.

The house actually owned by some very interesting people over the years. The first owner was a Jean Pascal, who acquired the land in 1726 with his wife and child. Its not clear exactly when the first house was built, but many historians believe that it occurred in 1728. Pascal was a native of Provence, France and emigrated to New Orleans as an employee of the Company of the Indies. The next owner was Renato Beluche, Sr., who was a

French wigmaker. His fifth son, Rene', born in the house in 1780, became a famous pirate and compatriot of Jean Lafitte and also fought in the battle of New Orleans in the War of 1812 (1815).

The next owner was a Spanish military officer named Manuel de Lanzos. During his ownership, the house burned in the great New Orleans fire of 1788 - I believe to the top of the first floor masonry walls, as there are still charred timbers on top of these walls. Lanzos salvaged what he could from the house and had it rebuilt most likely with materials salvaged from other buildings that also burned or partially burned in the same fire. I say this because much of the superstructure appears adaptive in the sense that it was originally designed for somewhere else, particularly the structure in the attic.

Eventually the house passed through a few more owners to the son of William C.C. Claiborne, first governor of Louisiana under United States jurisdiction after the Louisiana Purchase. Then a succession of Italian immigrants owned the house until the 1920s, when it was purchased by Stella Hirsch Lemann, who rented out suites to artists and upon her death willed it to the Louisiana State Museum in 1947.

Madame John's Legacy is thus the oldest surviving building in the French Quarter, and is a prime example of French Creole Colonial architecture. There are similar examples elsewhere in the city and in the state but not nearly as old. The construction is totally brick masonry on the first level with the exterior wall coated in stucco, heavy timber framing on the second level with brick masonry in-fill (Briquelette entre Poteaux) with the exterior walls sheathed in clapboards and the interior walls plastered, the attic is framed in heavy timber, and the roof is slate shingled.

E&A was selected by the State to design new roofing, waterproofing and masonry repairs for Madame John's. We are designing a new slate roof, and designing dampproofing the first level masonry walls with chemical injections to stop the rising damp and efflorescence (salt blooms on the surface of the masonry), and designing a coating to stop rain water intrusion.



## Electroluminescence

by R. P. Ehlinger

People are familiar with most of the different types of lighting available on the market; incandescent, inert gases (ex: neon), fluorescent, and LED.

The flexibility, rapidly dropping cost, and low operating cost of LED lighting is pushing the other lighting methods out of the market - so much so that it's becoming difficult and costly to find some of the older technologies.

There's another lighting technology that can compete with the flexibility and costs of LED: electroluminescence (EL). EL is the exciting of photons in an electric field from a solid material (usually phosphor based), generating light with very little heat. It takes very little power to accomplish this, but it works best at high frequencies (Hertz), so special inverters are needed, usually operating in the 12V-24V range.

EL has actually been around for a long time - most car panels use EL displays, along with watches, but they were limited by color and brightness capabilities - green or yellow, and not very bright.



*EL Car Dashboard (photo by Jonathan Gibbs)*

New material advancements and inverter technology has brought a wider range of colors and brightness capabilities. Available in panels, tape, and wires; they can be cut and spliced and shaped as desired, allowing their use in advertisement, architecture, artwork, and decoration as desired.

The latest development in EL lighting is paint. Now, instead of working with solid



*EL Billboard (photo by Peter Rogers)*

materials that require crafting, EL paint can be used. While a bit complicated, using a 4-layer process, the ability to paint a surface of any shape into any desired color is the peak of flexibility. While still more expensive than LED, it is definitely worth the extra cost for desired effect.

While it's current use is primarily on vehicles as vanity application (Airbus is painting its entire fleet with EL, making for quite a show when they land at night), EL paint is also making appearances on billboards, artwork, and architecture.

Architecturally, EL paint has the capability of pushing well past the current typical uses of EL. Previously limited to emergency exit lighting (signs, stair treads, pathways), and highlighting building edges with an eerie blue glow, current EL products now allow lighting to be applied in any desired fashion, limited only by their luminescence/watt capability.



*Eerie blue building edge highlights.*

### Infrared Radiating Paint

In addition to emitting visible light with EL, there are now paints which can emit infrared light - basically, a heater in a can. Instead of adding an expensive electric heat strip to your air handling unit, or replacing that forced air heater in the bathroom - why

not just paint an IR heater into your ceiling where needed?

At a thin 1/64-3/64 inches, It can be painted over and visually disappear when applied on a ceiling or wall. It can also be applied to subflooring before a finish floor is placed.

It operates at low voltage (24V), and works from 65F to a maximum of 150F (if rapid heating is needed), so there is low maintenance, longevity, and low cost.

In addition, because it only emits IR light, the heating effect is from the surfaces it reaches, which makes it perfect to prevent condensation and mold growth during the winter months.

Typically, radiant heated surfaces provide a more comfortable space than convection heating, because the air is not heated and dried out.

Current built-in radiant heating solutions are very expensive on the front end, requiring a long time to recover from their lower energy costs. When built into a concrete slab, if they fail, they can't even be replaced!

Mechanical radiant heaters are often expensive, and operate at high temperatures. They use a lot of power, are uncomfortable at close distances, and are a fire risk - the cause of many a tragic winter news story.

IR paint sidesteps many problems with previous radiant heating technologies. It is flexible in application - it can be painted anywhere - new or old construction, and is flexible in use, operating at much lower temperatures.

Keep this technology in mind both for new construction, or when planning to repaint your house or business.

Visit [www.litcoat.com](http://www.litcoat.com) for full information and specs on this amazing new IR paint.



*IR Paint on Restaurant Ceiling, before finish paint is applied.*