

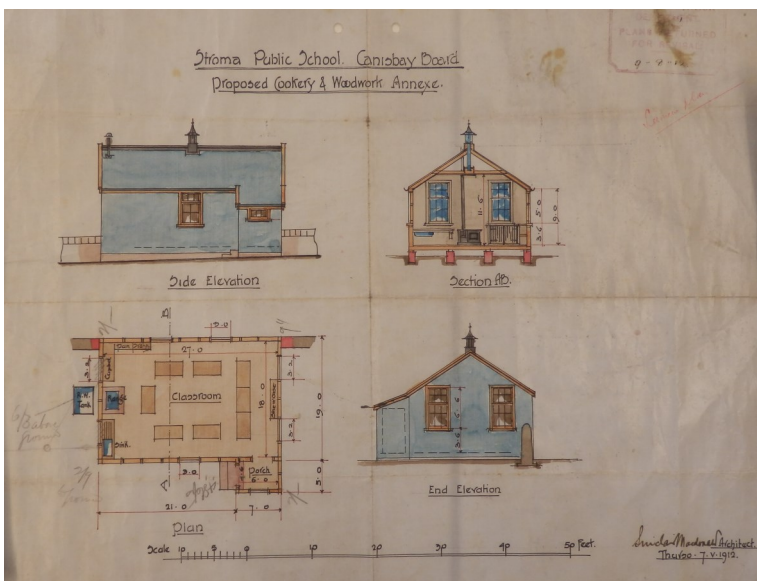
Barbarettas Sinclair Macdonald was born to John Macdonald and Barbara Sinclair in Brora, 18 August 1864. His mother died 31 August of the same year. He was brought up by his grandmother Jane Sinclair in Melvich (1871 census, Clyne) after the death of his Free Church Minister father on 31 March 1866.



By the 1891 census, he was 26 and working as an architect in Thurso, after serving time in Aberdeen and Inverness. He was now known simply as Sinclair Macdonald.

Sinclair Macdonald opened his first independent practice at 14 Orlig Street in 1898, moving a few years later to Princes Street. Secondary offices at Wick and Kirkwall were added later. The architectural firm designed: schools, churches, agricultural buildings, public buildings and houses across the County and over the Pentland Firth. The early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century show a particularly impressive number of municipal projects. The image above shows the Carnegie Library Building in Wick; below is a plan of Stroma public school.

Sinclair Macdonald Architects have left a marked impression on the townscape of Caithness by designing and altering some of Caithness' most iconic buildings including the Carnegie Public library in 1895 and Miller's Institute in 1891 and 1927. However, the firm also played a vital role in planning and modernising everyday homes. The Housing Act of 1919 reduced private housebuilding and local authority construction rose significantly. In 1931 alone the firm designed local authority housing in; Latheronwheel, Watten,



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# Sinclair Macdonald

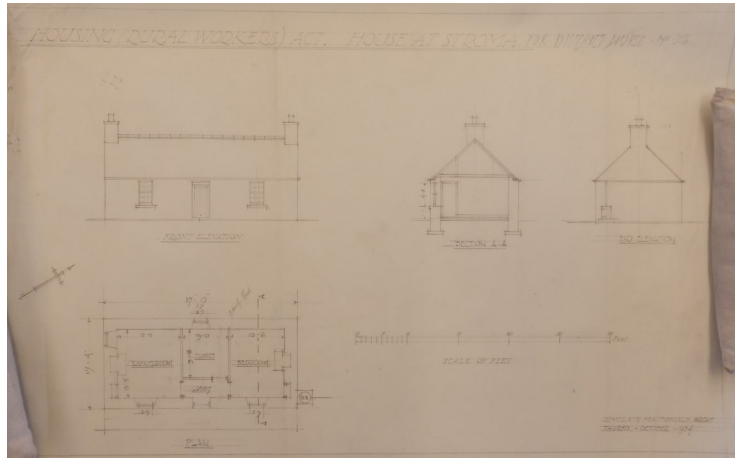
## ARCHITECTS OF THURSO

Bardnaclaven, Castletown, Keiss, Dunbeath, Latheron, Halkirk, Thrumster, Reay and Wick.

Hugh Sinclair Macdonald, his son, also became an architect. Born on 18 June 1903, he commenced his apprenticeship in his father's office in October 1921. He left to continue his studies in Edinburgh and Europe but soon returned to Thurso to join his father in his practice, and

became partner in 1931. The firm continued to grow and James Constable Leed joined in the 1930s; Archibald James Baxter, joined too in 1935. During those years the practice maintained a branch office in Wick.

Sinclair Macdonald died on 15 January 1936 and Hugh became the senior partner. Hugh Sinclair Macdonald served in the Second World War, returning to the office in 1945, in his absence the firm supported the war effort by designing facilities for wartime personnel in Caithness.



The firm continued to grow throughout the 1960's signing two new partners, James Campbell and John Barnie and developing housing schemes for Dounreay workers amongst many other projects. Hugh's son Alasdair joined the firm in 1974 and briefly opened a new office in South Charlotte Street, Edinburgh. The firm remained family run for nearly a century until Hugh's death in 1979; during that time Sinclair Macdonald Architects left a monumental legacy in the Caithness landscape.



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