

woman murdered in her home

A MURDER inquiry was launched in Kilmarnock yesterday after a woman's body was discovered in her home.

Police said Miss Marion Ross, 51, a former bank officer who lived alone, had suffered "a violent attack".

Her body was found at 6pm on Wednesday in the ground floor of her semi-detached house in Irvine Road, Kilmarnock.

Although her death was originally treated as suspicious, foul play was not initially suspected. However, the murder inquiry was launched after a post-mortem examination at Crosshouse Hospital revealed her death was not due to natural causes.

Detective Chief Inspector Stephen Heath, the officer heading the inquiry, said last night: "Miss Ross had suffered a violent attack in her home."

Neighbours in the quiet and affluent suburb described Miss Ross as reclusive and eccentric.

As an only child, she inherit-

ed the house from her parents, who died several years ago.

Miss Ross gave up working at the Royal Bank of Scotland's branch in John Finnie Street, Kilmarnock around five years ago, when her mental health deteriorated.

Neighbour Maureen Stevenson, 66, who knew her well, said: "I felt sick when a policeman came to the door and asked me when I had last seen her.

"He didn't say what had happened. It's come as a real shock. She always said hello to me and my dog in the passing, although she was a quiet lady and kept herself to herself."

Another neighbour added: "It's a very quiet street and it's frightening to think this has happened. All I know is she was unmarried and lived alone."

Miss Ross had her own car and lived an independent life. She is not thought to have been seen by neighbours for several hours before her body was discovered.