

“What we do should leave no trace”

When the new industrial site has been commissioned, the old one will start to be dismantled and reclamation work will begin.

TEXT: MONIKA NILSSON

A DECISION concerning the dismantling of the old concentrator in Garpenberg is expected this autumn, and reclamation work will pick up speed before long. A reclamation plan has already been compiled for the new site and the TME, which will remain operational for many years to come.

“The idea of reclamation is that we’ll leave as little evidence of our presence as possible so that people won’t be able to see any trace of the industry there in future. We start planning the closure of a mine when we’re planning its construction, and this is a big job,” explains Malin Söderman, HR and environmental manager at Garpenberg.

THE GARPENBERG AREA has been home to mining since the 13th century, which presents a challenge quite unlike any other.

“We only have a detailed knowledge of what we ourselves have been doing here

since 1957, but we’ll be examining in detail what’s been left in the ground and reclaiming this as appropriately as possible. Of course, there’s every chance we’ll find a few surprises, but Boliden has enormous experience and expertise when it comes to reclamation work. But it might take a bit longer, depending on what we find. The site is also adjacent to historical remains, so that requires care and good communication with the county administrative board in respect of both the environment and historical remains,” says Malin.

Reclamation always takes place in stages, and at Garpenberg it’s estimated to take about six years. The first step is to dismantle the old plant. After that, the ground will be examined thoroughly. When we have a detailed knowledge of what’s there, we’ll carefully plan what to do next. After that, reclamation work will be ongoing for a

couple of years, followed by years of regular checks.

“The most common methods involve digging out, enclosing or covering over contamination and materials containing metal. As regards the TME, where residual products from concentration are stored, the contents mustn’t be exposed to oxygen as this may cause metals to leach out of the sand. We mainly have two methods which we can use nowadays. One involves raising the water level so that everything is covered by water, or else we cover it over with moraine, for example. The surface layer is then topped off with a further protective layer. We should have minimal impact in environmental terms. The site will always be marked by historical mining, but Boliden’s operations should leave no trace,” says Malin.