NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

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NATIONAL REGISTER

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name: Napier Furnaces Historic District 40LS14

other names/site number: [redacted]

2. Location

street & number: [redacted] [X] not for publication

city, town: Napier [N/A] vicinity

state: Tennessee code: TN county: Lewis code: TN101 zip code: N/A

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
[X] private	[ ] building(s)	1	4 buildings
[ ] public-local	[X] district	4	sites
[ ] public-State	[ ] site		structures
[X] public-Federal	[ ] structure		objects
	[ ] object	5	4 Total

Name of related multiple property listing: Iron Industry on the Western Highland Rim 1790s-1920s

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this [✓] nomination [ ] request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property [✓] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria. [ ] See continuation sheet.

Edwin C. Bearss — 3/28/88

Signature of certifying official — Date

Chief Historian, National Park Service

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property [X] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria. [ ] See continuation sheet.

Herbert L. Harper — 2/16/88

Signature of commenting or other official — Date

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, Tennessee Historical Commission

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

[✓] entered in the National Register. [ ] See continuation sheet.

[ ] determined eligible for the National Register. [ ] See continuation sheet.

[ ] determined not eligible for the National Register.

[ ] removed from the National Register.

[ ] other, (explain:) _____

John J. Knoll — 5/4/88

Signature of the Keeper — Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)	Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)
PROCESSING/manufacturing facility	DOMESTIC/multiple dwelling
EXTRACTION /extractive facility	LANDSCAPE/park
DOMESTIC/single dwelling	

7. Description

Architectural Classification (enter categories from instructions)

OTHER:gabled ell

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK
walls Weatherboard
roof Tin
other BRICK, WOOD

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Napier Furnaces site is comprised of the remains of two furnaces, a forge, a manager's house, commissary site, and a mine site. A moderately heavy concentration of green and grey glassy slag is found at the 1837 site, while more porous black slag and the furnace stack remains are located on the 1890 site. Concrete and brick foundation remains and iron fragments are also seen at the 1890s site. An earthen dam has been built near the 1834 furnace and the 1890s furnace site is presently woods.

Napier Mine No. 1 is an open pit that is [redacted]. Numerous strip mines are also found in the general area.

A circa 1910 house, probably a mail order house, was built near the 1834 furnace site. Several ironworks managers are believed to have resided here. The two story frame house has an ell-shaped plan with additions. Multipane windows, simple wood gable trim, and a wrap around porch are other features of this house. Across the road from this house is the stone foundation of the ironworks' commissary. Three modern buildings are also on the site.

The early furnaces at Napier were cold-blast charcoal ones. The 1834 furnace was thirty-three feet by nine feet. By 1860 the forge had four fires and two hammers. The second furnace was a sixty foot by twelve foot hot-blast charcoal operation in 1894. The stack, casting house, stock house, and charcoal shed were all located near the railroad. In 1897 it was converted to the hot-blast coke method of production and by 1901 the furnace had two fire brick stoves.

Brown hematite ore was mined from Napier Mine No. 1. During the 1890s, the mine became so deep that mining was unprofitable until new machinery, a "steel log washer with crusher and jigs," was put in (Dawson). Tipples, wood or steel chutes, trams, and dinkies were used in the mining operation.

The 1834 furnace was abandoned in around 1890 and a railway was built from Summertown (near the Lawrence and Lewis county line) to the new village of Napier. Houses were built in rows near the furnace. A typical house would be built with four rooms and leased to company employees.

[X] See continuation sheet

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally

Applicable National Register Criteria ☒ A ☐ B ☒ C ☒ D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G N/A

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)
ARCHAEOLOGY-HISTORIC
INDUSTRY
ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance
circa 1834-1923

Significant Dates
N/A

Cultural Affiliation
19th Century Anglo-American

Significant Person
N/A

Architect/Builder
Unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Napier Furnaces site is significant under criterion A because of its association with the industrial development of the village of Napier. The ironworks were the principal reason for the settlement and economic prosperity of the region. When the furnaces finally went out of blast, the village began to decline. Under criterion C, the house at the site is a good representation of the type residence constructed by an industry for managerial personnel. Larger and more detailed than worker housing, the house has retained its exterior architectural integrity. Under criterion D, the slag and stack remains have the potential to yield valuable information on the operation and demise of an ironworks that utilized both hot- and cold-blast methods of production. The presence of slag and building foundation may reveal valuable information on site patterning of the various components of an ironworks. Data recovered from the mine site could reveal valuable information on changes in mining technology throughout much of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. A study of data from the forge site may provide information on why the use of forges declined during the late nineteenth century.

Around 1834 Judge Felix A. Catron and George F. Napier formed a partnership and erected an iron furnace and forge [redacted] (Goodspeed 1887: 802). They planned to produce pig iron, hollow-ware, castings, and blooms. The Napier family had been involved in the iron industry for many years. In 1838 George Napier's uncle, Dr. Elias W. Napier, endorsed a loan for the unprofitable ironworks. Known as Buffalo Iron Works, the company consisted of a furnace and a forge. Dr. Napier became the sole owner in 1844, but he gave a half-interest to his nephew William C. Napier in 1845. The deed stipulated that William repair the furnace and put it into blast, so the ironworks may have been out of operation for a time. After Dr. Napier died in 1848, William became the sole owner and the ironworks became known as Napier Furnace (Phelps and Willett 1953: 7-8).

The furnace was probably refurbished in 1856 when the ironworks consisted of 10,000 acres and was supplied by water power [redacted]

☒ See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

☒ See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State historic preservation office
- ☒ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Specify repository: Division of Archaeology

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property [redacted]

UTM References

A [redacted]
Zone Easting Northing

B [redacted]
Zone Easting Northing

C [redacted]

D [redacted]

☒ See continuation sheet

[redacted]

Verbal Boundary Description

[redacted]

☐ See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary was drawn to include the visible remains of furnaces, building foundations, a company house, and a mine area. Because the use of the land between the mines and one furnace and the second furnace and building is uncertain, a discontiguous boundary has been drawn.

☐ See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Claudette Stager, Historic Preservation Specialist
organization Tennessee Historical Commission date October 1987
street & number 701 Broadway telephone 615-742-6723
city or town Nashville state Tennessee zip code 37219-5237

The presence of slag and the remains of the furnace meet the registration requirements set down in the multiple property form. The company house retains a high degree of integrity of materials, workmanship, location, and association. The mining resources also retain a high degree of integrity and meet the registration requirements of the multiple property form.

(Nashville Union and American 15 March 1856). Ward, Rains, and Company leased the furnace in 1873, refurbished it, and ran it intermittently until 1890. In 1876, it had the capacity to produce 207 tons of pig iron each month. Killebrew (1874: 797) reported that the Napier Furnace was the only furnace operating in Lewis County. The forge was refitted in 1879 and had an annual capacity to produce 600 tons of blooms (American Iron and Steel Association 1880: 58).This was the last operating forge on the Western Highland Rim. After 1880, forges ceased to be a part of the industry in this section of Tennessee.

The Napier Iron Works was reorganized from the Old Napier Furnace Company by E. C. Lewis and J. Hill Eakin of Nashville in 1891. In February 1892 the new furnace was put in blast. This was a hot-blast charcoal furnace, sixty feet tall and twelve feet across the bosh. It could produce up to 18,000 tons of car wheel pig iron, under the brand name "NAPIER," each year. It was during this time that the village of Napier developed. The installation of modern equipment and better transportation meant expanded production and the need for more workers. When the furnace was fully operational, sixty men would work in the mines and 100 men were at the furnace. Company-built houses were rented for $3.50 per month; supplies could be purchased at the commissary.

Steam powered "dinkies" replaced mule-drawn tram cars around 1892. The iron works granted a right-of-way to the Nashville, Florence, and Sheffield Railway Company to build a branch line in 1894. Prior to this, iron was hauled in wagons to Mt. Pleasant in Maury County, the nearest shipping point. The furnace was converted to a coke-fueled operation in 1897. During the latter part of the nineteenth century, Napier brand pig iron was sold in Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Buffalo, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Chicago, St. Louis, Birmingham, and San Francisco.

Locally mined ore no longer supplied the needs of the furnace by 1905, so additional ore from mines [redacted] were shipped in. In 1907 the ironworks had an annual capacity to make 25,000 tons of foundry pig iron. Over 100 tons of iron were produced daily during 1912 when the furnace was operating. Between 1912 and 1917, 205,550 long tons of washed ore were utilized by the furnace. A new residence for company managers or supervisors was built during the 1910s. (Local residents remember it as a mail order Sears house). Larger than the four-room worker houses, it may have been the only residence with decorative features. After World War I, production declined and the last blast occurred in 1923.

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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