

These carved stone eagles once stood on the gates of Sutton Rectory. By the 1880s they were already described in architect's drawings as "old ... repaired and refixed," showing they were many decades old even then.

Their bold, heraldic style — smooth chests with incised plumage, simplified wings, and strong curved beaks — reflects the late Georgian or early Victorian neoclassical taste (c.1780–1830). Eagles were fashionable symbols in gate and garden design, drawing on Roman associations of imperial power and Christian links with St John the Evangelist.

They may have originated at the Manor's "Great House" or an earlier rectory. In the 18th century, ownership passed from the Brownlow family to Captain Henry Cliffe, and then to his son Henry, who died in 1761. His heiress, Margaretta Eleanora Cliffe, married Thomas Hatch in 1785, brother of Sutton's rector, the Revd Giles Hatch. As her guardian, Giles had received considerable funds, and he may have been responsible for introducing such neoclassical features to the rectory estate.

When the rectory was rebuilt in 1887 for the Revd Turner, the eagles were retained, linking the new house with its predecessor. Today, set into the walls of Beech Tree Close, they remain striking witnesses to centuries of rectory life in Sutton and to the enduring classical ideals of the Georgian age.